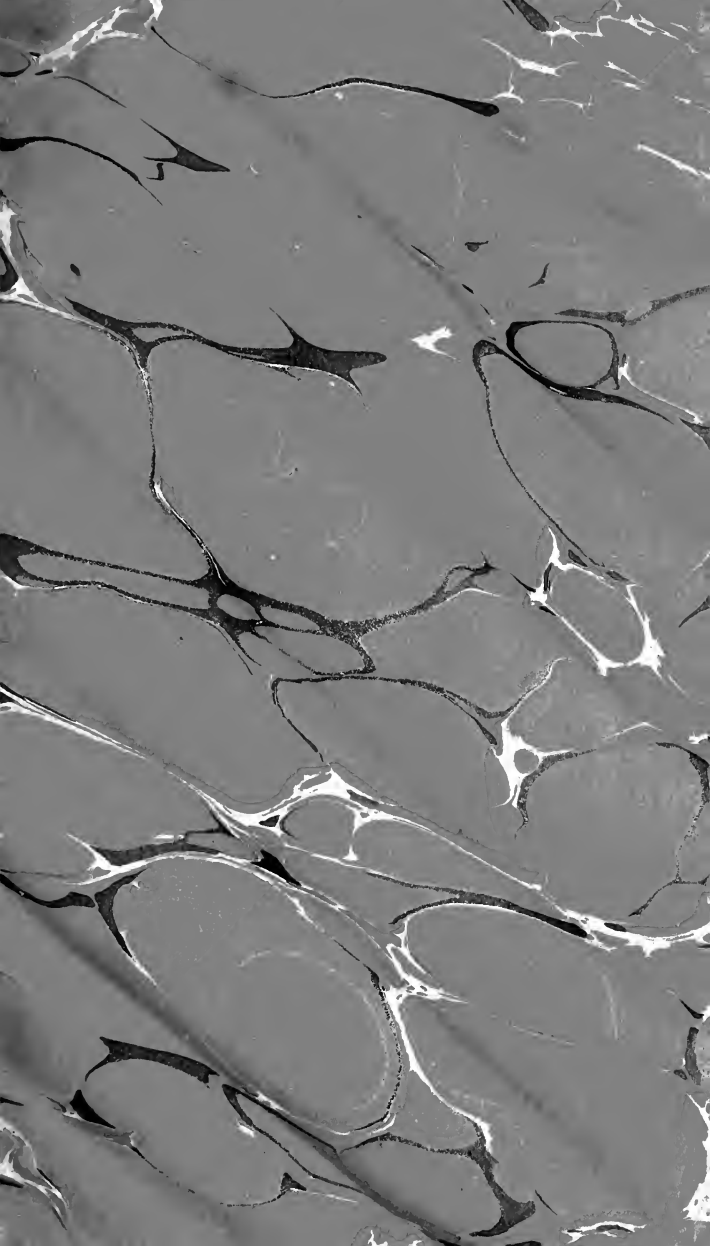


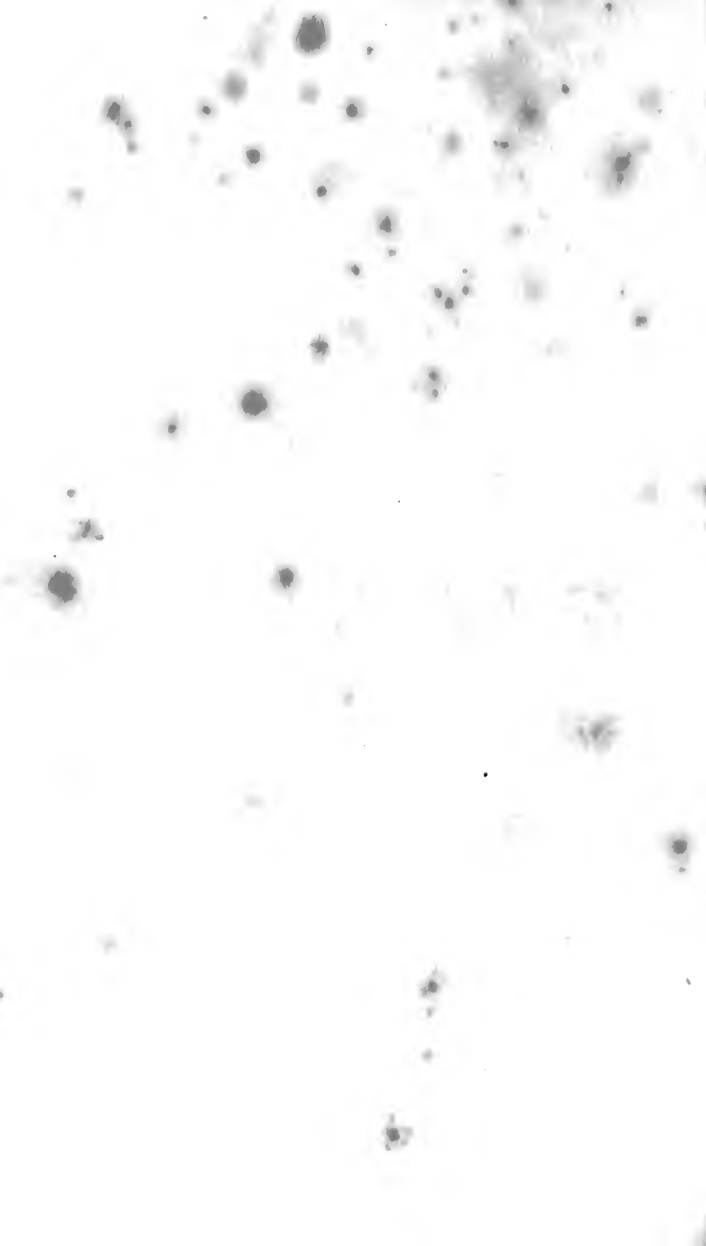
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HUSBAND HUNTING;

OR, THE

MOTHER AND DAUGHTERS.

A TALE OF FASHIONABLE LIFE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE,

BY

S ——— L J ——— N, Esq.

THE age has passed away, when Novels delighted themselves with the picture of manners that never existed, and the narration of adventures that never could have been performed; with unnatural sentiment, and ponderous impossibility.

Time—which has been charged with such ravage of external things, is not always a conspirator against human improvement; that which has covered the surface of the Pyramids with decay, has polished the fabric of the Novel, and we now see the gravest forms of history and of life reflected in it with the elegance

of poetic fancy, and the sharpness of individual satire.

In our Work we have been not insensible to this great improvement ; and if we have suppressed well-known names, or thrown a veil over well-known countenances, we have yet drawn *from the life*. The two great sources of wisdom, personal knowledge, and public fame, have not been forgotten ; and *titled beauty*, beset by family intrigue, will find her virtues and sufferings in Catherine Greville ; while *rival Duchesses* may be reproved by the heartless ambition and profitless artifice of Mrs. Courtney !

We now commit our volumes to the world, we shall not say, with indifference to their reception ; for what author has not felt the buoyancy of hope, and the depression of fear ; what literary bosom has not been rejoiced by anticipated panegyric, and appalled by prospective criticism ?

But we must take the common chance of our species, and be content to purchase the honours of literature by the general penalties of fame.

Yet in the utmost severity of fate there is sometimes a compensation; and he who is criticised by all must be first read by many.

That Reviewers claim an exemption from this great law, has been strongly affirmed; but we must allow that it has been as strongly denied. "*Non nostrum est tantas componere lites.*" Perhaps truth lies between, and Reviewers read—the title.

But whatever opinion the world may pass upon our work, we have that within, which living statesmen and dying heroes have been often denied—our own perfect approbation!!!

When our volumes shall have reached after-ages, and shall make the learning of the wise

and the delight of the gay ; when pages of annotation shall be amassed upon a sentence, and solemn controversies piled upon the simplicity of a surname, then shall be our triumph. Yet what shall it then avail us ; if we shall be where triumphs are heard no more !

S. J.

Bolt-court, London.

HUSBAND HUNTING;

OR,

THE MOTHER AND DAUGHTERS.

CHAPTER I.

I live with bread like you, feel want, taste grief,
Need friends.—*Shakspeare.*

“**IT** grows late, your honour,” said old Peter, the white-headed valet de chambre of the master of Halston-Hall, as he advanced to the bed-side. No answer was returned, but a low murmur evidently meant to express reluctance to be disturbed. To this Peter was accustomed, and he soon returned to the charge. “A fine rainy morning, your honour: the post has come in, and the

newspaper is arrived, and on the breakfast table." The charm failed of its effect, and Peter played his last card. "There are visitors, your honour; a lady and her son." A voice, something between querulousness and anger, now uttered from within the bed—"Visitors! and why, in the name of all that's preposterous, did you not tell me that before, you old goose?" The rest sank into soliloquy. "A lady! and what can she have to do with me? some petition, some made-up story to extort money: I'll be sworn it's some baggage, marauding through the country, in tragic black, or with a child in one hand and a subscription list in the other. But I have my money for other purposes. Go, you inveterate old fool; turn her out, and tell her to look for dupes elsewhere. No, stay, I'll go and turn her out myself." The speaker now

flung back the curtains, and was making an effort to rise, while Peter stood at a distance with customary awe, when a glance at the sky, now charged with heavy clouds, and full of the chill and dreary aspect of a fixed rainy day, repelled him. "Yet, for what should I rise?" he ejaculated rather than spoke. "To see the same sky I saw yesterday; to hear the same nonsense; to eat, drink, and doze the same; to be robbed by the same rogues; to feel life the same dreary, dull, disgusting thing, to the end of the chapter. Go, sir, send those people about their business, and tell them never to come here again until I am dead and buried; do you hear? Why does the fellow linger, bowing and grimacing like a monkey or a Frenchman?"

"Don't speak so loud, your honour," said Peter, with his hand on the door,

and in a tone hushed to a whisper, "or you will be heard in the next room—Mrs. Vaughan is there."

A flash of surprise lightened across his master's withered features; he was evidently smote by strong and mingled recollections. "Mrs. Vaughan! my brother's widow! Confound your stammering; why did you not awake me when she came: order a fire—breakfast. Go and tell her that I will see her immediately." "I dare say, sir," said Peter, "the poor lady is glad enough to find herself under your honour's roof at last. She has been travelling all night in the mail, and a cold and rough night it has been. She has been inquiring for your health, and hoping that your honour stands out this weather well, and asking how you look, and a whole heap of other kind things."

“ Indeed! well make her my compliments. Twenty years ago, Peter, she was the finest girl in the county: a bright-eyed, blooming, light-hearted creature.” The rest was nearly to himself, and broken by the process of putting on his various habiliments. “ Cold and hungry, no doubt, and thinking me in her soul a heartless, worthless, kindless, miserable old man. But she was a fool: to marry my brother, a fellow with nothing to depend upon but his commission! They did not want for advice, for I told them that they were a pair of fools. So they married, in my very teeth, and never came near me after. They took me for a hard-natured, bitter, money-saving dog; and what they thought me, perhaps, after all, they made me.”

During this conference the new vi-

sitor, Mrs. Vaughan, awaited the result, in no very enviable state of mind. With her eyes fixed on her son, she revolved the perplexing thoughts that press upon an affectionate and delicate mind, making its first application to dubious generosity. The tear stood in her eye as she thought of the separation, which must be the consequence even of success in her appeal to the old man in behalf of his nephew; and as the increased movement in the next room told her that the interview was still nearer at hand, she felt her spirit die within her, and, in the language of holy weariness of the world and its conflicts, wished for the "wings of a dove, that she might flee away, and be at rest."

Her son amused himself in gazing round the curiosities and oddities of the room. Halston-Hall was a venerable

mansion ; and it was, besides, the mansion of an old bachelor. It was, of course, filled with furniture, combining the formidable taste of ancestry with the quaint and rustic absurdities and equipments of an old country gentleman, bound up in resolute celibacy ; massive chairs, of the fashion of Queen Anne's time ; a ponderous marble table, under a mirror, in which

“ He of Gath might have seen his whole bulk,”]

and surrounded with a frame, crowded with bird, beast, and fruitage, carved in sullen oak : a mighty bookcase piled with black letter, the Game Laws, Treatises on Magistracy, and County Chronicles ; walls hung with family portraits, now all alike, and all covered with the brown antiquity of dust and smoke ; prints of celebrated racers, that had long run their last course ; a mantel-piece,

loaded with noseless busts, the importation of a travelled ancestor; the hereditary snuff-boxes of the whole line; and, suspended above all, the fishing-rod, the net, and the fowling-piece, with which the present lord of the mansion had once ruled over lake and forest. At length the door opened. Mrs. Vaughan could not recognize in the figure before her the man she had known twenty years before. The vigorous frame and full feature were gone, and she saw nothing but the feebleness and exhaustion of premature old age. Her countenance probably expressed this, for he suddenly flung off Peter, and advancing towards her with an affected firmness of step, took her hand. "You don't know me, madam, I perceive," said he; "no wonder, no wonder.—Time, time, madam, and illness, and solitude, though all that, per-

haps, was not to be laid to my charge ; and the hatred and contempt for a wretched world of rogues and fools, madam, might have broken down a stronger man. But you," and he gazed intently on her fine expression—"Time has passed lightly over you ; yet sorrow has been here ;" and he drew his pale thin finger across her forehead. "What, tears ? ah, I suppose you have seen hard days with that fool of a husband." The blood mounted into Mrs. Vaughan's cheek. "Fool ! sir." "Well, well, say no more about it," he murmured, as he started away and paced the room. "Why, in the name of common sense, did you not tell me your situation long ago ? I inquired for you when the first burst of that silly quarrel was over : but you were not to be heard of. So you had rather bury yourself in some

obscure corner of the earth, where you might as well have been dead at once, than have come, and have dealt fairly with me; openly, honestly, told me that you were alone, that you were not above recollecting your husband's brother; and it might be," as he thrust out his shrivelled hand, "that you would not have found me the man of stone and iron that you thought me. And, now, there's the mischief of it!—you have come too late. I am hampered already; bound neck and heels by a whole muster-roll of relations, nephews, nieces: yes, they remembered me well; there was no fear that they would forget the old man, at least till the breath was out of his body.'

"I entreat you, sir, to believe," said Mrs. Vaughan, in a voice overpowered with emotion, "that I was incapable of

forgetting you ; that I lamented the unhappy difference of our families, which I fear was sustained by unfortunate and unfriendly reports; and that I forbore to trouble you, only from respect for your quiet, and the wish of one who never ceased to have a brother's affection for you."

"Come, dry your eyes, and sit down, lady—Mrs. Vaughan—sister. Let the past be past. Introduce me to your boy. Bless my soul ! wonderfully like : the living image of my brother. Well, sir, and what do you intend to be, a bishop, a judge, or a general?" Francis blushed and bowed. "That," said his mother, "must be left to his own decision. I am in great doubt."

"Well, madam, there is no doubt that we must do something with the fellow. He is too old for bird-nesting and ram-

bling through the country, and too young to be trusted into that hive of knavery and absurdity, the world, alone. . . . So we must send him to college: there, at least, he will learn to chop logic, drink port, and put a grave face on a confounded deal of nonsense. I have been there myself, madam, though but little of the leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees has stuck to me."

"I have been thinking of mortgaging my pension," said the anxious mother.

"No, madam, you shall not mortgage so much as your pin-cushion. We'll set about the matter without delay;" and his faded eyes lighted up with a new feeling of benevolence. "Bound as my hands are by promises to my sister's family, and they will want nothing for asking for it, I can yet launch the lad into life. No thanks, madam," and he

gently put down her hands, which she had raised almost in an attitude of prayer: “ I did as much for Philip Courtney, my nephew: the boys shall start fair. But,” turning to Francis, who had listened with a delight that forbid all thanks but those of his burning cheeks and brightened eyes,—“ you have never been in London: well, young man, London you must see first. There was a monstrous spirit of jeering in Oxford in my time, and I am inclined to think the spirit has not much declined. So, you must not be laughed at as altogether a rustic; and so—I have it. I’ll give you a line to Philip Courtney; a fellow that knows the town well, and, perhaps, more too than is good of it; but, no matter, he will keep you out of mischief; and this day shall the letter be despatched.

It is a day of reconciliation, and we will make it memorable."

Day after day passed, and it was about three weeks before the old man could prevail upon himself to part with his nephew. At length a letter was written to Philip Courtney, enclosing another from Mrs. Vaughan to his mother, with whom she had kept up, for some years, a reluctant and inter-mitting correspondence.

CHAPTER II.

'Tis with our judgments, as our watches, none
Go just alike, but each believes his own.

Pope.

Scandal's the sweet'ner of a female feast.

Young.

MRS. COURTNEY had been handsome, and a belle of her day; opulent; and had fully assisted an extravagant husband in getting rid of his estate; and arrogant by nature and habit, a quality which had faithfully remained behind when the estate and the beauty had fairly flown. In all points a woman of the world, in the world she was determined to remain, and to figure as long as she was able; and for those purposes, was compelled to exert that severe ingenuity by which

so many of the luckless and fashionable contrive to keep up appearances. She still exhibited an establishment, *imposing* in all senses of the word; gave occasional routs, inevitably announced, with the keenest circumstantiality, in the newspapers; went to birth-days, with a diligent loyalty worthy of the purest times; curtsied low to a countess, twice as low to a duchess, and honoured the king, at least as faithfully as she did homage to the other half of the commandment. This was to be presumed the mere result of a due respect for subordination; for no "Lord-lyon" could observe the degrees of human inequality with a more scrupulously rigid distinction. The whole race of the untitled or unestated felt their doom at once, and it was said that the blood and rental of the circle could be estimated at any dis

tance that would give a view of Mrs. Courtney's physiognomy. Her Christian virtues were as public as those of a woman of fashion ought to be. She appeared, with undeviating punctuality, in the charming and crimson-cushioned pew of Dr. Dandy's delightful chapel, and there, safe and select from the obtrusion of the vulgar, gazed, in serene piety, on the Doctor's auburn wig and diamond ring; re-echoed the aspirations of lips, touched by the very spirit of politeness; and, with her feet on the fender of her stove, suffered wisdom, in its most delicate essence, to distil into her bosom: Mrs. Courtney had a son, of whom more is to be told in this history, and daughters, who may be suffered to speak for themselves. Those, altogether, were now her great business; and to scatter a family handsomely

through the Court Calendar is still found among the very severest of the regular tasks of fashionable maternity.

Mrs. Courtney was not wanting to herself in this emergency. She consulted the Baronetage and Peerage lists with fresh activity; gave double the number of routs; rode with her fair daughters in the park, at the congenial hour for picking up an escort; had the first intelligence of the arrival of a Yorkshire baronet, or a wandering Irish peer, invited him to her mansion, and lunched him into incipient love; condescended to introduce the wealthy uninitiated into fashion; and chaperoned the awkwardness of heiresses without a friend.

The four fair daughters of this accomplished lady were lingering over a late breakfast, and languidly discussing the costumes and complexions of the last

night's rout, when their mother walked into the room. Her step was hurried, and her countenance ruffled to a degree that would have surprised an observer of the infinite serenity, varied only by the most gracious of smiles, that expanded over it for the six long hours of the night before. She brought an open letter in her hand. She stood for a moment, with her eyes fixed upon the group, but obviously too much engrossed by her personal meditations, to have any very distinct knowledge that they were gazing at the changes which ran so rapidly over her countenance, "in pale ire, envy, and despair."

However, she at length perceived them, and smoothing her features at once, and in the most suppressed tone of vexation, she inquired whether any of the ladies had received letters that

morning. "Not one," was the general reply. "Then, my dearest loves, I have received one, which agitates me most painfully," sighed Mrs. Courtney; "not for my own sake; for what have I to fear or feel in this world? but for you, my loves, for your interests, for your happiness, for your honourable establishment in life, my sweet girls." The honied strain was customary, and her sweet girls were quite satisfied how far it was sincere. But the matter was now evidently something beyond the usual well-bred calamities, and they solicited to know the nature of this formidable missive. She glanced over it, and her eye caught sudden fire. "There," said she, flinging the letter on the table; "read there. I wish from my soul that that woman, that Mrs. Vaughan, were in Newfoundland, or anywhere else ten

times farther out of the world. She has made her way to that old fool at Halston-Hall, in full weepers and weeds, no doubt; has told him a long story with her sentimental tongue; and has absolutely won over the old miser, ay, melted his heart, heaven help us! *his* heart, by the whole artillery of sobs and sighs—‘drawn iron tears down Pluto’s cheek.’ Nay, she has had the effrontery to prevail on him to provide for her overgrown boy at college, out of *my* money. For mine it was already, by his will, and mine it would have been this hour, if the old fool had not been so obstinate in living. I should not wonder if he would change his will: at all events here is a new danger, and, let me tell you, a most formidable one.”

The intelligence was certainly perplexing; but youthful belles are not

easily put out of countenance, and, after a moment, Clementina, her eldest daughter, and by habit taking the lead in the family council, observed, "that the matter *was* vexatious, and that the vexation was not at all lightened by its having been the work of imprudence in a quarter for which she had, of course, the highest consideration." The sisters smiled; but Mrs. Courtney had heard this preface before, and no smile sat upon her cheek. "Let me hear no more of this folly, child," uttered the matron, in a tone which it took all her serenity to keep within bounds. "Read the letter for yourself, and see, if you like it, how near all your prospects are to ruin, ay, nothing less than total ruin."

Clementina was a blonde and a belle of the first distinction. She had, upon

due occasion, the most roseate of all complexions, and the most captivating of all dovelike eyes above it; but now the cheek was flushed fiery red, and the dovelike eyes flamed. “Madam,” said Clementina, rising from her seat in angry majesty, “I will tell you by whom, if we are undone, that undoing has been effected;—it was by the vanity, the blindness, the idle artifice”—Here, however, the remainder of the party interposed; and Clementina was calmed down to resuming her chair. “Yet,” said Seraphina, the sentimentalist of the family, “my dear sister, as to my mamma’s corresponding now and then with Mrs. Vaughan, there was, after all, no great harm in the affair. It was useful to know what she was about; and even now, but for this correspondence, she would have been un-

dermining us with the old miser, without our knowing a syllable on the subject. She certainly writes a very pretty pathetic letter, edged still with tragic black, and sealed with a very elegant antique."

Julia, the youngest and most beautiful of the family, now observed, by way of palliation, "that Mrs. Vaughan might be forgiven, as her efforts were not for herself; that, even if she were to come to town, she could not enter into competition with the young and lovely." Clementina and Seraphina made an involuntary bow; "and that she could not, of course, marry the old gentleman of Halston-Hall." "Nay, for that matter," whispered Martha, the homeliest of the household, and probably for that reason the least dulcet in her style, "it is next to impossible that she can

marry any one. There is no hope, alas! for *widows* of the sober age of thirty and upwards." A glance from her mother's eye showed that the arrow had reached its mark; but Mrs. Courtney was not accustomed to sit long under exposure. "Martha, my love," said she, in her most silvery tone, "happy are they whom Nature has secured from the troubles of either, wife or widow.—But here," and she flung the letter to a dependant niece, sitting in one of the windows; "here, Catherine, since none of those young ladies, in their infinite wisdom, will read this letter, let me hear it coolly, if the present company have no peculiar objection." She threw herself back on the fauteuil with a bitter smile, covered her eyes with her hand, and listened with a flushing cheek,

and a lip quivering with variety of passion.

The letter was, after all, a simple one: it mentioned that "the necessity of educating her son Francis, now rapidly growing into the time when he must choose a profession, had overcome her dread of applying to the old man of Halston-Hall, the brother of her late husband. That she had unexpectedly found him more than civil, nay, generous; that Francis was to be furnished with the means of going through the University, and that, as he must first visit London to make his arrangements, she would feel grateful for his cousin Philip Courtney's guiding his inexperience through the wonders and perils of the great city." "And here comes Philip to answer for himself," said

Martha, as the door opened ; and young Courtney, a showy youth, dressed in the extreme of fashion, entered, with an exclamation, “ What, all assembled, the whole Divan ! Well, so much the better ;—I have news for you ; but I see you have had your despatch too,”—and he took the letter peevishly from Catherine’s hand. “ Was there ever any thing so unlucky ! That incorrigible woman—that feeble, flexible, childish uncle of our’s ! I must give up my horses, be seen no more in the clubs, and get rid of my curricule and all that,—if this fit of ridiculous generosity lasts. Why, I have post obits to the amount of—” He checked himself in the full career of confession. “ No, as to the estate into which those people will worm themselves, I don’t care ; but it is confoundedly hard, at my time of life, to be

compelled to dangle after heiresses, and chain oneself down to matrimony.” “Does your letter mention the woman’s son,” inquired Mrs. Courtney. “No—yes,”—said Philip, crushing it between his hands. “*That* I am determined not to do; I’ll be bear-leader to no one’s booby from the West or from the East. I’ll not make myself ridiculous to the whole world by teaching him his paces!—’pon my life, I should not be surprised to find myself followed by every acquaintance I have on earth, with their shillings a-piece for the show I had the happiness to exhibit to the admiring multitude.”—A thought sprang up in his mother’s prolific brain. “No rashness, sir,” said she, “no boyish imprudence. Come here, Philip.”—She took him by the arm, and leading him to a vacant window, communicated her

design in a voice too low to be heard by the sisters; and interrupted only by Philip's sudden "Ha!—capital—it must do—first of politicians." Those exclamations, however, at last became so illustrative, that Mrs. Courtney, with her finger on her lip, led him from the room.

CHAPTER III.

Misers are not unuseful members of the community ; they act like dams to rivers, hold up the stream that else would run to waste, and make deep water where there would be shallows.—*The Jew.*

He had the wit which I can well observe
T'o-day in our young lords ; but they may jest
Till their own scorn return to them unnoted,
Ere they can hide their levity in honour.

All's well that ends well.

Mr. Vaughan was stigmatized by the world, at least, the little world to which he was known, as a miser. Whether or not he deserved the appellation we will not at this moment determine. Certain it was, that his establishment was by no means proportioned to his fortune ; but one plain carriage, when it was well known that he could have as easily main-

tained three—servants as few as it was possible to dispense with—a table never sumptuously spread;—all were against him. He mingled but little in society, and his charity was bestowed with a cautious and sparing hand. It was possible that his retired life might be the most congenial to his taste,—that he might avoid society from a dislike of it,—that he might be well aware of the truth, that whatever gratification he might have in gazing at two or three splendid equipages, he could not possibly make use of more than one at a time,—that the smaller his household, the less was his anxiety,—and lastly, that a long life of experience might have taught him the necessity of guarding against the impositions practicable on a solitary man. But where conduct is liable to two constructions, the world

generally bends the balance to the worse, and the little word "miser," was so simple a solution that it was used without ceremony ; yet, there was one person, at least, who was far from condemning Mr. Vaughan's system of economy, and that was his nephew, Philip Courtney. It was true that Mr. Vaughan had never made any direct promise to his nephew, but somehow or other it had become a generally-received opinion that he was to be the old man's heir. He was always a privileged guest ;—he was the only relative who, for many years, had set foot beneath his roof. His professional pursuits and other engagements did not permit him to pay frequent visits to Halston-Hall. Thus he came often enough to remind the old man of his existence, but not often enough to weary him ; and then

he displayed such an abundance of the virtues during his stay,—was so abhorrent of the extravagance of fashionable life,—was so abstemious and so pastoral in all his tastes, nay, even slumbered so opportunely during his uncle's evening slumber, that his excellencies were irresistible. Thus having once established himself in favour, he thought the coast clear before him. The unfortunate Vaughans, from the long variance which had subsisted between the families, were as nothing in the way of such claims. Courtney was one of a numerous family. Splendid marriages for her four daughters, and his uncle's fortune for her son, were his mother's views; and Philip was too well aware of the advantages of money, and had too many ways of spending it, to have any intention of frustrating her expectation; still, he

wished that some more decided step should be taken. He could never learn that any will had been actually made. The old man was capricious,—was far advanced in life,—some artful dependant might gain his ear;—he might die suddenly. In his absence, the fear of being superseded haunted him occasionally; but no very serious alarm had taken possession of his mind, till the unexpected intelligence of the arrival and consequent reconciliation of the Vaughans seemed to call upon him to reconnoitre the frontier position of the enemy, and exert his finesse, of which he had his share, to prevent their acquiring undue influence. He prepared himself accordingly to answer his uncle's letter in person.

“It is time,” said Mr. Vaughan, one morning, after his brother's widow had

been just discussing the propriety of her return home, "that we should receive an answer to our letters, and when they arrive you will be able to make your arrangements. Since the idea first entered my head, I have been anxious that the cousins should be better acquainted. The young are seldom fit guides for the young; but Philip is an exception to the rule. He unites the prudence of age with the gaiety and good temper of youth,—a rare combination let me tell you, Mrs. Vaughan, and one that cannot be too much valued in these degenerate days. Some of my kind friends would persuade me that he is an extravagant coxcomb, but I never could find it out myself; and as they are obliging enough to set me down as a miser, you may judge how much reason I have to believe them. But,"

starting up suddenly and walking to the window, "if my eyes don't strangely deceive me, there is Philip Courtney himself walking up the avenue. It is he; yet I don't know what should surprise me either: it's just like his good-nature which never suffers him to do things by halves." The old man paused, for his nephew's voice was just then heard at the door. "Well, Sarah," said Philip to the old housekeeper, with that air of condescension which he so well knew how to adopt, "how has all gone on with you since I was here last? uncle well, I hope. I suppose you are quite gay since my cousin's arrival?"—Then in a low voice, he added, "have they been here long?" "Almost three weeks," said Sarah, in a tone of discontent. Philip started back with unaffected surprise. "Almost three weeks,

and I not hear of it till last Monday—the Devil!” Courtney paced the room furiously, but he soon recovered himself with admirable presence of mind.

“Rather fatiguing to the old gentleman,—must put him out of the way a little, I should think?” said he, pausing.

“Oh dear, no, your honour; my master seems quite an altered man, ever since Mrs. Vaughan has been here,—has sat up twice, a quarter of an hour beyond his usual time,—invited the vicar and his lady to dinner,—has been down into the cellar himself for some of his oldest wine, some that your honour never drank of but once,—and moreover, the poor old coach horses that have led such an easy life so many years, have been ordered out every day on Mrs. Vaughan’s account.” “Alarming symptoms these,” muttered Courtney. “Well,

well," suppressing his chagrin with some difficulty and impatience, "it must be a pleasant change for you all." "It's a change no doubt, but one not at all to my mind, Sir," replied the housekeeper, who had been too long in the administration to give up her rank quietly.— "They have been here now three weeks, as I was saying, and a great deal of trouble they have been to us all;—new ways have been brought in, and old servants forgotten." "Well, Sarah," said Philip, smiling, "and I too must have your good offices; mention my name to my uncle now and then, when I leave this, merely to remind him of my regard,—you understand me, and you shall have no complaint to make of me," slipping a well-timed *douceur* into his ally's hand. Brushing hastily by, lest he should encounter a similar interrup-

tion in the form of some other soliciting domestic, he made his way to the drawing-room, and introduced himself to his relatives. Without any dangerous or even explicit allusion to the late event, he delicately, and with much apparent sincerity, congratulated Mrs. Vaughan upon meeting her in his uncle's house; won the old man's heart by his rapid discovery of some valuable additions to his collection;—then reverted to the leading topics of the time, astonished Francis by his universal knowledge, caricatured with ludicrous fidelity—a task for which he was very well qualified—some of the reigning follies;—was familiar with the last Court news; and, in short, charmed the whole party by his fund of anecdote. “You give so animated a picture of society in London,” said Francis, “that I long to

judge of the correctness of the portrait by my own experience. When shall we set off?" "Whenever you please, boy," said old Vaughan, gravely; "but take my advice, and be not too eager in your pursuit after pleasure. I think I may trust him under your guidance, Philip; but recollect—I have formed sanguine hopes of you both, and which ever should heedlessly disappoint them, may find serious reason to repent his imprudence." "Be under no apprehension, my dear uncle," answered Courtney; "Francis and myself, I am persuaded, will soon be sworn friends. I shall just show him enough of London follies to make him return with fresh zest to literature and green fields,—to country habits, and rational enjoyments. In a week I shall have led him from one end of London to the other, and intro-

duced him to every place and person worth seeing. Then let him retire to his studies, and labour to become what his talents must make him, an honour to his profession." "Sensibly spoken, Philip," observed his uncle, "act up to these principles yourself, and you have a fair chance of going smoothly through the world." Then proceeding to inquire concerning his prospects, Philip, with a sudden air of dejection, observed, "that the law was but an up-hill profession for a man of small fortune;" but added, "that he expected shortly to be called to the bar, and had no doubt, that by a long course of intense application, close confinement, and rigid economy, he might almost hope to succeed." "Yet, you don't look much like one, whose health and spirits have been injured by intense labour," said Fran-

cis. "Forgive me, my dear cousin, if I cannot fancy you in the light of a grave student—a pale recluse;—you, who seem so much better calculated to mingle in the gay world. I can picture Coke and Blackstone all set to flight by the thunder of a fashionable knocker, or the rattle of a curricule wheel." "Ah, I see you don't know me yet," said Courtney; "you must come to town and judge for yourself.—You should see me as I always am, immersed in papers and parchments;—piles that would frighten an inexperienced eye,—declaiming to the bare walls of my study, at least with all the zeal, if I cannot boast the eloquence, of a Demosthenes,—with spiders for auditors,—half a dozen huge folios set up as witnesses, and as many chairs arranged for the jury. Then, with my mimic court about me, I thun-

der away, forgetful of every thing around, till sometimes, in the heat of the argument, I put the honourable court into a little disorder.” “It’s well it is but a mimic court,” said his uncle, “if your enthusiasm is of such a dangerous nature. And pray how many bottles, &c., and relics of the last night’s feast do you upset at the same time ;— I suppose you have your moments of relaxation after days of so much toil?” “Ah, my dear Sir,” said Courtney, “I see you have yet to learn that a young man who expects to rise to any eminence at the bar, must resist every temptation to excess. One step in the road to dissipation, and he is undone for ever.—That’s my maxim. For one whose prospects depend solely upon his own exertions, there is but one track

to pursue. It may take years to reach the point of your ambition, but the goal will be won at last." "You offer but few temptations to follow your example," said Francis, thoughtlessly. "I could not endure to sit for years looking over tedious parchments in the air of a smoky city. A soldier's life for me. Instead of dragging on the dull routine which you have been describing, let me carve my own way to fortune and fame. I am for taking wing like a bird, and enjoying equal liberty.—I am for basking beneath a foreign sun, with the world all before me, free to choose." "This is the choice, and these are the arguments of a boy, Francis," said Mrs. Vaughan, who had watched the progress of the discussion in silent anxiety, touching the youth upon the shoulder:—

“ a little experience, or even a little reflection, may change your sentiments.”

“ Ay,” said the old man, “ how little those giddy boys think of the reality of nights in the open air,—the chance of capture or death,—unhealthy climates, scanty provisions, and the hundred other military miseries. There are two sides of the medal, and once embarked in the profession, you would be compelled to see both.” Mrs. Vaughan’s eyes overflowed—he forbore to press the subject; and taking Philip by the arm they left the room. “ I like my cousin vastly,” said Francis, gazing after them, “ he is so candid, so much at his ease, so sincere, it is impossible to help liking him.” “ I too,” said Mrs. Vaughan, “ am agreeably disappointed. His mother is a woman whom I never liked.—

Her cold language and haughty manners repelled all affection on my part, and perhaps prejudiced me against her whole family. Philip has certainly treated us with deference and politeness. He has, at least, the merit of having escaped the contagion of her influence ; and if he be as amiable as he appears to be, one could scarcely feel justified in wishing to interfere with his claims.” “ If, my dear mother,” cried Francis impatiently, “ why will you always damp my spirits with an if?—Why must we always live in a world of suspicion? How long has this distrust been a source of alienation in our family?—You doubted Mr. Vaughan was generous,—and if he could be persuaded,—and if he knew how to forgive ;—and did I not encourage you to hope,—and

has the hope disappointed you?—And will you not believe me, when I tell you that you will find Courtney's heart as good as his manners are engaging?"—"Ah, Francis, Francis," sighed his mother, "may you meet with more friends than I have done."

Philip continued to make himself so agreeable to all parties during his short stay, that Mrs. Vaughan's prejudice against him was greatly diminished; and when her son exultingly remarked the change, she felt unwilling to damp his spirits by further opposition. Thus she heard the day fixed for his departure without remonstrance; yet with feelings more acute than she was willing to acknowledge. Young Vaughan's feelings were less disguised. He looked up to his parent with an excess of filial

devotion. "It was for her that he wished to toil, for her he was anxious to be prosperous,—it was only to be the means of increasing her indulgence that he could bring himself to leave her." This was his glowing and enthusiastic declaration ; but his mother at once doubted and believed.

Many a painful memory rushed into Mrs. Vaughan's mind, and added double bitterness to the parting hour.—Francis was unsuspecting, and might be deceived.—He was impetuous, and might be misled.—His affections were strong, and they might be unworthily bestowed.—"I will offer no advice, and intimidate you by no predictions, my dear boy," she said, "convinced as I am that your own heart will be the best guide. Let not the force of example

persuade you against your better judgment; bearing in mind that the world is habitually a place of hazard;—that the mother whom you leave behind is alone;—and that should she be disappointed in you, she has no other hope on this side of the grave.

CHAPTER IV.

What numbers here through vain ambition strive
To seem the most transported things alive ;
As if by joy desert was understood,
And all the fortunate were wise and good.—*Young.*

It was a wet and gloomy morning when young Vaughan commenced his journey. The first day passed on tediously.—Courtney was less conversible than usual. He even appeared thoughtful and out of spirits ; but the next day the sun burst forth with fresh brilliancy, and as they approached London, Philip's animation appeared to return.—“ Welcome,” he exclaimed, extending his arms in a rhapsody, as the giant dome of St. Paul's broke gradually upon

their view,—“ welcome, thou inspiring sight—welcome the dear delights of a London existence!—now to exchange my uncle’s muddy port for sparkling champagne. Farewell long dull lectures on prudence,—the fearful sight of three-score and upwards,—and the awful warnings of the easy-chair. Thank heaven, too, I am once more out of the reach of the worthy rector’s endless drone.—Glorious exchange; balls, operas, routs, fêtes, and theatres.” “ Why here’s a metamorphose,” said Francis, throwing himself back in the chaise in laughter. “ Can I believe my senses.—In what new character are you going to appear?” “ Does the transformation startle you? My dear fellow, it’s effected merely by the change of atmosphere. Hitherto you have seen only the chrysalis, now

you behold the butterfly," said Courtney; "Why, a man of fashion is lost, completely out of his element in the country;—dead—actually torpid—deaf—dumb—blind. Here is my sphere of action,—now I begin to breathe once more. But you look grave, displeased: eh? Is fashion then in your eyes such a very shocking thing?"

"By no means," replied Francis, "yours is the season of enjoyment, and I am too young to set up for a philosopher. All I disapprove of is, if I may venture to be candid,"—"Oh, deliver your sentiments freely, I entreat—Well then, all you disapprove of is—" "The little deception which you have practised towards my uncle. Why not appear before him in your true colours; why affect a character?" "Because I

tell you, my dear fellow, my uncle is the most precise personage in existence. In dress, manners, and opinion, he would make me as antique as himself; and whilst with him, it is but fair to indulge his whim. I don't deny that I have expectations from him; but I feel at the same time, that for every expression of natural vivacity, he would cut off an acre. Take my advice and follow my example. I don't envy you your good fortune in having gained the old man's good graces so suddenly. He's as rich as Cræsus, and fair game for us both. But I must have your promise, that if you live with me, and live as I do, you'll not take advantage of my confidence and good fellowship, run the same race of pleasure, and when you're tired of it sneak down into the country to betray my interests." "Impossible,

such treachery is not in my nature," said Vaughan, somewhat indignantly. "Then your hand upon the bargain," said Courtney, regaining his good-humour; "you are still the good fellow I took you for,—that awful frown rather alarmed me,—but all's well again."

It was nearly ten at night when the travellers reached Mrs. Courtney's door. The glare of lights, the rattle of carriages, and the incessant peal of the knocker, announced a gay assemblage within. "We are in high luck," said Courtney, "this will save you from the necessity of a formal introduction, than which I know nothing more detestable." The spacious hall was nearly filled with a profusion of hot-house plants;—the intervening space was occupied with what the lady of the mansion deemed absolutely essential to the eclat of her party;—

an almost equal number of the lounging attendants of the guests above. "At home to-night, I suppose," said Courtney, carelessly, to a servant. "No, Sir, merely a select conversazione," said the liveried coxcomb, affecting, as nearly as possible, the tone and manner, as well as the *degagé* air of his master. All that Vaughan saw increased his surprise.—He had always understood that Mrs. Courtney had an anxious eye to his uncle's estate, and that the whole family were dependent on this expectation. Yet could a woman, able to live in such a style, have any anxiety on the score of fortune? Her avarice must be of a most insatiable nature;—yet this looked not like avarice. If such were her expenditure, what must be her income? The obvious fact is, that Vaughan was a novice in London.

The conversazione was select and classic, and comprised not above a hundred and fifty of the most approved dilettanti! The tables were strewn with portfolios, vases *à l'antique*, a Venus,

“ When unadorned adorned the most,”

a genuine bust of Plato, and a splendid proof impression of David's *Enlèvement des Sabines*, captivating to the eye of beauty and connoisseurship. But the apartments were not large; and, between the burning odours, the glare of the candelabra, and the perpetual movement of the crowd, Vaughan was utterly bewildered. He stood for a moment in perplexity, till Philip returned, leading a stately and rather reluctant figure. “ My mother,” said Courtney. Francis made his lowest bow. “ Oh, Mr. Francis Vaughan, I presume?” said the lady. “ Pray how long have you been in

town?—Fine weather in the country?—But I see my Lord just come,” and she turned away to a fashionable-looking man who was warring his way through the crowd. Francis was overwhelmed; her coldness, haughty air, and nonchalance, at once surprised and offended him, and he was about to leave the room, when his cousin seized him. “Come, my pupil, that’s my mother’s way; not the most captivating one to a lover of the melting mood I confess;—but here, I have a true Pastora for you, a sentimentalist of the softest colour—my resistless sister, Seraphina. Beware of your heart.”

Seraphina was sitting at a harp, in the very attitude of fascination. One ungloved arm gently reposed upon the strings, which it now and then swept with a fairy touch, producing a whispered

harmony to the tone of a voice subdued to the lowest murmurs of music. Her eyes were large, languishing, and of celestial blue ; and those she alternately cast down upon a half-opened morocco volume, and raised up to heaven with the air of a Sappho. Her reverie was broke by “Seraphina, my dear, our relative, Vaughan—Quite thunderstruck by the sight of human beings ; for compassion’s sake take him under your patronage, and introduce him to”—“ Ah, brother,” sighed Seraphina,

“ Those fair creatures of the element,
That in the colours of the rainbow live,
And play i’ the plighted clouds.”

“ Just the thing for him,” said Courtney, “ for he seems altogether in the clouds already.” The fair Seraphina’s eyes had discovered that Vaughan was not altogether the repulsive rustic that the

family circle had voted him, and she made room for him on the sofa beside her. Vaughan expressed a wish to hear the harp. "Excuse me, Mr. Vaughan," was the reply, "I do not affect to be a mistress of the instrument; I merely touch it as an assistance to the feeblest voice in the world. In short, the little I know of this 'treasure of sweet sounds,' is the result of a strange passion of mine for all that is harmonious." Vaughan implored. She bent gently over the harp, threw down her eyes in the divinest attitude of meditation, and began. Her voice was sweet, and highly cultivated; and Vaughan was charmed, and listening intently, when he was startled by "Capital! very superb indeed;—the Tenth Muse, by every string of Apollo's lyre!" Seraphina stopped, and Vaughan sprang from his seat with

defiance on his brow, which turned into astonishment, as the pale and languid speaker, an utter stranger to him, quietly fixed himself in the vacated seat.—“ Poh,” said Courtney, coming up and catching Francis by the arm ;—“ don’t you know Flatter ?—Oh, I had forgot your verdant education. Take no notice of him ; when he has talked all his fine things out to Seraphina he will quietly retire.” Vaughan resisted. “ Come, come,” said his cousin, “ we must have no *fracas*. Flatter is the very best fellow within the Bills of Mortality. Why, he’s essential to more Dukes and Duchesses, and to something higher still, than any man about town.” “ Impudent, intolerable,” muttered Vaughan. “ Yes, both, and yet neither,” replied Courtney. “ Habit has made them second nature. They are dovetailed

into his character, until they give it all its variety. The truth is, society cannot dispense with him ; his business is to put every man, woman, and child, on the best terms with themselves. Conceive the importance of such a tongue, when the whole world of fashion have such eternal reason to be discontented with themselves. Let me introduce you. As you are to be an Oxonian, he will congratulate you, at once, upon your talents, your learning, and your certainty of the Bishop's Bench, or of the Woolsack, which you please." " This to a man's face ? " said Vaughan. " Undoubtedly," was the answer. " His good things are not to be wasted on the desert air. I can assure you, that for the absent he has quite another style. But the fact is, that just now he is a particular favourite of Mrs. Courtney, and if

you wish to be popular here—" Flatter had risen from beside the fair Seraphina, and had touched Courtney on the shoulder, who turned to speak to him. Vaughan was obviously the object of inquiry, and to his astonishment he heard himself named as Captain Vaughan. " Eh—absolutely—a militaire—showy figure." " Yes," said Courtney, " but not fond of being talked to on professional subjects; so cut the Peninsula, and all that, if you intend to affect his feelings." In another moment Vaughan was honoured by a bow, into which Flatter had thrown his whole captivation. " My best friend, Courtney," said the man of smiles, " who is always doing kindnesses to all the world, has promised to do me an honour of which I have been long ambitious." " Eh! hang it, I was near forgetting,"

said Courtney.—“ Mr. Flatter, Captain Vaughan.” He pressed Vaughan’s foot, who, however, between surprise and the oddity of his new acquaintance, made no attempt to speak. “ Capt. Vaughan, a relative of this charming family, Courtney tells me.—No circumstance could be more fortunate for a gallant soldier returning from his toils,” said Flatter. “ Oh, vastly lucky fellow Vaughan is in every thing.—The world all before him.—All couleur de rose,” said Courtney ; “ Mars, Venus, and all that sort of affair. I will enlist some time or other, when time or life hangs heavy on my hands. Faith, even already, but for that villainous gunpowder, I would myself have been a soldier.” Vaughan laughed. “ For heaven’s sake, Philip, no more bantering.” Courtney suddenly turned away to plunge into deep

conversation with a dark-featured wily-looking foreigner, who had just entered. "There he goes," said Flatter, "one of the finest fellows in the circuit of May-Fair; but for—" "For what?" inquired Vaughan—"For that ill-countenanced scoundrel that has now got hold of him. There, Sir, see how that fellow, Italian, or Frenchman, or Jew, but black-leg, whatever else he may be, grasps him in his clutches. There they go together; and before twelve to-night—" Vaughan looked with unfeigned astonishment at the change in Flatter's gesture and countenance. His feeble and lounging figure had suddenly grown upright, and his languid and sallow visage now deepened and quivered with fierce emotion. "That fellow is a public evil, a preyer on the follies of the inexperienced;—a plunderer of every man

that accidentally associates with him ;— a human wolf ;—or, all combined in one, a professed gambler. But I will be revenged, deeply, desperately revenged.” He suddenly recollected himself ; his vehemence had drawn the eyes of the loungers upon him, and he stopped. Vaughan felt interested in the situation of his cousin ; and pointing to a card-table, they sat down. Flatter took up the cards, but his recollections were not yet allayed, and he flung them down again with something little short of an execration. “ A mad world, my masters,” soliloquized Vaughan, looking on him as he deliberately tore card after card. “ Yes, Sir,” said Flatter, “ a mad world ; and let me tell you a bad world too. Deception, trickery, and false play in every soul that tenants every body above the peasant ; and he is

honest only because he is a beast of burden, and falls asleep under his load. You are a young man, Sir, and have yet to learn what a peep behind the curtain of the haut-ton alone can teach. See that young fellow, all moustaches and monkery, with a face as free from care as it is free from any trait of understanding, honour, or manliness;—see him heaping his heavy attentions on that ancient dame, who receives them with such boundless gratitude. That fellow is absolutely ruined, not worth a beggarly denier; living in the rules of the King's Bench, the only *rules* he will ever live in." A bitter smile at the point quivered over his cheek. "And the lady?" said Vaughan. "The lady, Sir, has been *only* twenty years the wife of a man who has lavished on her all that almost immeasurable wealth

could procure. She is the mother of a large family; and yet within these three days she will elope with that broken profligate."

Vaughan shrank from the picture, and turned to another group that were lounging over a portfolio. "Ay, there," said Fltater, "you see tastes of another kind. There an old slave of excess is teaching the young idea how to shoot, and beguiling that pretty, delicate, and opulent young simpleton into giving her beeves and acres to his generosity. In one month from this minute, she will be living on the bounty of her relations, and he be flourishing away on the Continent, in scorn of debt and dun, with his *chère amie*, the wife of that respectable-looking peer with whom he is, ay, on my soul, at this moment shaking hands as if they were a pair of brothers."

“ Yet,” observed Vaughan, “ not at all doubting your knowledge, can Mrs. Courtney be acquainted with all this?” “ With every tittle,” said Flatter.— “ Then how can she admit them to her parties?” “ Pho,” replied the Cicerone, “ how can she exclude them? Would you have her shut up her house, like a theatre, for mere want of an audience? Would you have her go to war with the whole polite world? You may select your pointers, or your merino sheep, or your prize pigs, but who the deuce that gives a rout can select her company? You must take the crows as black as Nature made them. The first necessity is to fill you ranks; and if you can’t get your troops of the regulation size, why, what can you do but recruit from the army of reserve? No, not of *reserve*,” said he with a smile; “ of that quality

they are guiltless, to do them justice." Vaughan was amused, but still more repelled by the unrelaxing acrimony of Flatter, who had now fairly abandoned all his pretensions to sycophancy. "There, at least," said he, pointing to a showy personage of mature age, with a star, sitting by a mature woman who had evidently been extremely handsome, and with whom he conversed with a grave yet intimate interest—"there is something to console the eye for those ill-assorted connexions. That nobleman and his lady have the true look of matrimonial confidence and decorum. They have gone apart evidently to avoid the frivolities round them." "Yes," said Flatter, "you are a physiognomist, and can perceive matrimony in both their faces. They are married." "Their name"—said

Vaughan. “Not exactly the same now,” replied Flatter, “though it was so once. They, however, have sympathized in all their doings since. They both ran away from each other;—they both sued for a divorce;—they both married persons whom they both habitually turned to ridicule, and of whom they both are now weary beyond all telling; and both profess, at this moment, something as ardent and absurd as a passion for each other; the gentleman declaring the lady to be the most charming woman in England, and the lady declaring the gentleman to be the most irresistible person on earth. They visit each other with a graceful punctuality, worthy of the days when knights wore armour, and women were divinities. At the opera, the lady’s box is regularly adorned by the gentleman’s assiduities;

and at parties, as you see, they pass the evening cooing on the same perch, a pair of turtles; quite a rebuke to the lightness of the boys and girls round us, and fully deserving of their name, the ‘divine divorcees,’ or the ‘separable inseparables.’”

CHAPTER V.

A habitation giddy and unsure
Hath he that buildeth on the vulgar heart.

Shakspeare.

When people of superior fortune, whom Providence has enabled to bestow obligations, claim a right, from the favour they confer, to tyrannize over the hopes and fears of a mind in distress, they exercise a cruelty more barbarous than any in the whole history of human nature.

Know your own mind.

CATHERINE GREVILLE was the daughter of the late Mr. Courtney's eldest sister, who had married an officer in the Indian army, reputed to be a man of some consideration and fortune. Colonel Greville, on the loss of his wife, had returned to England, principally on account of his daughter, the only child she had left behind her, then but seven

years of age ; on whose delicate constitution the effects of the climate were already visible. It was his intention, at this time, to have retired from the service, and lived for his child alone ;— but Catherine, however engaging and amusing, was too young for a companion, and could not make up to him for the society and occupations he had lost. His income was large, but from his habits, not sufficient for his expenditure. He argued himself into a belief that it was but justice to his daughter, to endeavour to reach the height of his profession ; in short, the restlessness of an Indian campaigner, and the ambition of a gallant spirit, all led him to regret a life of inactivity, and confiding his daughter to the care of Mrs. Courtney, her nearest relative in England, he once more departed for the East. For

the first nine years, he had remitted annually, a handsome sum for Catherine's maintenance and education; but the last twelve months had made a material change in her prospects. The Colonel's letters, and what was of far greater consequence in Mrs. Courtney's eyes, his remittances, had altogether ceased. In the last letter which she had received from him, he had informed her that he had been ordered up the country, but that as soon as he was again settled in any particular station, she should hear from him again. She had never heard of him since. It was more than probable that he was dead, although no certain tidings of that event had ever reached her. Mrs. Courtney was active in conjecture; it was possible that he might have died intestate, and his property fallen into hands de-

terminated to withhold it from the natural heir.—He might have married some one whom he was ashamed to own, and bequeathed his fortune in favour of a second family.—Lastly, even though he should be yet alive, absence and other connexions might have estranged him ; he might have begun to look upon his daughter as an incumbrance, and having renounced the idea of returning to England, have formed the meritorious resolution of leaving her on Mrs. Courtney's hands. Any of these surmises was equally fatal to the interests of Catherine. Her aunt began to look upon her as one who had no longer any claims but those of misfortune. She imbibed a selfish dislike towards the unhappy girl ; a feeling which, having once taken possession of her mind, it was by no means in her power to disguise from its

object; and Catherine was not slow in making the discovery.

A certain air of haughty superiority in the lady herself, and a want of respectful attention from the hitherto servile domestics, alert enough in observing any change like the present, a contemptuous glance, or ill-natured sneer from one or other of her cousins, all conspired to force upon her the unpleasant conviction that she was no longer a welcome guest. Catherine's spirit revolted at this treatment. Her heart bounded to be free; but where could she turn? She was helpless,—she had no resource against the world,—she had as yet scarcely entered it.—She judged of mankind only by the specimen before her eyes.—The view was unfavourable, and she felt no temptation to seek further. Besides, she had been, in some

measure, bequeathed to her aunt ; and Catherine felt that, painful as her situation might be, she was not authorized, without her father's sanction, to quit the asylum which he had provided for her. She had thus no alternative but to suffer. Mrs. Courtney would have been glad to have seen her niece married and out of the family, for she was handsome, and might gradually eclipse her belles ; but it was impossible to doubt that she was offended, and an opulent match would give her dependant the power, as she must have the will, to revenge. She did not know the gentle being whom she would have crushed, if she thought that revenge had its place within her spirit. But she had exercised her art of tormenting too long, not to believe that the object of her hate would grasp at the first opportunity of

retaliation, and taste the joys of triumphing in her turn. This idea was wormwood. In their evening assemblies she almost neglected her guests, in the eagerness with which she watched Catherine's movements. Her keen eye followed her from room to room.— Among their circle were a favoured few, with whom it was treason for her to be seen. Mrs. Courtney had a motive for every action of her own, and imagined the whole world to be governed on the same principle. The very arrangement of her supper-table was not without its meaning, and Catherine's place was always assigned where neither wit nor beauty could make an impression. It might have been thought that among her cousins she might have found sympathy and friendship; but, with the exception of Julia, she must

have looked for it in vain. They had their own interests to pursue, and Catherine Greville unconsciously interfered with them all. She was graceful, lovely, and seventeen. Clementina Courtney was a fine showy woman, of five-and-twenty. Catherine was daily improving before her eyes. Constant dissipation, and occasional disappointment, had taken from Miss Courtney's appearance the first bloom of youth, a loss she had no scruple to replace by art; a practice however, perfectly sanctioned in the circle in which she moved. Her mind had received the same gradual tarnish.—There was a fatal contrast between Catherine's graceful simplicity and Miss Courtney's superficial politeness. She had all her mother's narrow policy; but observation had taught her to improve upon her manners. In short,

she was quite as worldly, but more dextrous. A subtle courtier, she had a thousand charming ways of ingratiating herself where it was her interest to please ; and as many ingenious ways of getting rid of an acquaintance whom she found it necessary to slight. She always felt the ground before her, and knew exactly how far she might venture. She had her near-sighted bow,—her haughty salutation,—her condescending smile,—and her cordial welcome. She knew exactly whom she could oppress, and whom she must flatter, where she might safely advance the loftiest pretensions, and where it was necessary to lower her tone. Miss Courtney had entered life at an earlier period than her mother ; and with greater advantages, with an air of fashion and beauty in her favour, she was not without her admirers. Martha,

the second daughter, with less pretensions to personal attraction than any of her sisters, hoped to carry all before her by her conversational powers. She was not without some talent; and was an amusing, but always a dangerous companion. She studied every person and object alike with the view of rendering them ridiculous; she has been heard to complain that she had been sometimes thrown among persons not absurd enough to be amusing. But she had an inexhaustible subject for her powers in the follies of her sister Seraphina; who, on her part, maintained too dignified a demeanour to condescend to a retort. This fair and fond creature was the Lydia Languish of the family. Seraphina, who, without one touch of feeling in her heart, had always a ready tear,—who deemed a smile almost treason against

the laws of sentiment;—Seraphina, who was always in love, and pronounced it the privilege of love to be unhappy;—who saw a romance in every common event, and a disguised swain in every stranger that approached; and would have refused to listen to the suit of a lover unaccompanied by some vision of adventure; all this was irresistible in Martha's eye, but Seraphina mused on unmoved. Julia, the youngest daughter, at this period just nineteen, was the only one of the family who could boast that rare and dangerous possession, a heart;—she had no other guide than Nature;—she was all life.—Her's was not that forced animation so revolting and so easily detected, but a gaiety which derived its source from innocence and a real sensitiveness to enjoyment. She was thoughtless to a

fault, and often gave pain by the heedlessness of her remarks, but the offence was pardoned as soon as committed; for her ingenuous countenance showed that she could not intentionally wound the feelings of any creature in existence. She was accused of being a coquette; but if one may venture on such an incongruity, we would say that Nature had intended her for one. Better dispositions lay dormant in her breast; and there were not wanting those among her friends who ventured to predict that the time would come, when that coquetry which now cast a glare over her manners, would mellow down into a capacity for steady and lasting love.

CHAPTER VI.

Nothing exceeds in ridicule, no doubt,
A fool in fashion ; but a fool that's out,
His passion for absurdity's so strong,
He cannot bear a rival in the wrong,
Though wrong the mode, comply ; more sense is shown
In wearing other's follies than your own.—*Pope.*

ON Vaughan's calling next morning in Harley-street, he found Courtney impatient for his drive. " Look there," said he, as he hung with one foot on the step of the curricie, " what would Uncle say to this?—Yet the animals cost quite a trifle,—the cheapest things about town,—tricked Lord Piper immensely.—Think of curricie and all—going, going, gone, for a cool five hundred! Ay, stare if you will, my country coz. So,—

ho,—Psyche,—always playing the devil.” He got down to assist his groom in arranging something about the harness of the impatient horses: “These animals have a sort of history about them; broke Lord Scamper’s neck,—were bought at any money,—and presented to Piper by the next heir to his Scotch estate;—a shrewd fellow that—perfectly Scotch. But, as Piper probably intended some more exalted tumble for the termination of his career, he sold this set-out to me for whatever I would offer; so I had, as you see, my horses *dog-cheap*. Ha, ha, ha!—And now for glory!” He sprang into the curricie, and away they flew. Courtney drove like a professor of the art, and warred his way through the crowd of carriages without fear or fracture; till, at a sudden turning, the horses came in

contact with a splendid barouche, from which issued a sudden scream, followed by several sullen oaths from the coach-box. Courtney, standing up in the curricule, and flinging an execration at the party inside, made an apology to the coachman; and, with a low bow, extricated his horses, and drove off. Vaughan could not restrain his astonishment at this curious misplacing of ceremonial. "Poh, you rustic," returned his cousin, with a burst of laughter, "don't you know? Yet, poor devil, how should you know, that the coachman is,—'pon honour, there's not a more accomplished flagellator about town,—is my Lord Straddle, mighty in Liverpool, and the vicinity;—has had the most complete education,—studied the thing,—drove the Liverpool dilly three months at a time,—wore his wraprascal,—took his shillings,

—growled at the closefists,—and took off his cartridge of gin in true professional style. 'Pon honour, I don't know how I shall look him in the face after such a proof of my want of science."

"But the ladies in the carriage?" said Vaughan. "Ladies! three of his Lordship's housemaids, essential for ballast. His Lordship is heavy, ay, confoundedly heavy, in more senses than one, so as he and his coach would be *top-heavy* together—ha, ha, ha!—he packs strong below,—loads his live lumber in the hold."

"But who goes there," said Vaughan, pointing to a diminutive figure, upon a grey pony. "Who? Don't you know? That's Death upon the pale horse!" was the answer. "Indeed!" returned Vaughan; "let me have a nearer view, for it becomes every man

to prepare himself for an acquaintance with that formidable personage. But why does not the apparition keep to its natural promenade, the church-yard?"

"Sir, Bond-street and its consequences bury as many fortunes and their owners too; as any established church-yard within the Bills of Mortality," replied his cousin. "Well, then, why not keep itself to its proper hours? and if it must re-visit the earth, re-visit it only by the glimpses of the moon, and in proper costume?" said Vaughan.

"No, no,—nous avons changé tout cela. All hours, and all places, are now alike, or, with but a trivial difference. Pretty women meet death, I will allow, generally between twelve and six in the morning; but then it is in drawing-rooms full a l'outrance. Gentlemen of honour meet it, pistol in hand, from six till nine, in

the shades of Hyde Park, or on the sunny side of Primrose Hill. Merchants from nine till three, when the Stock Exchange closes, and men deal no more. Citizens, after dinner, abroad ; great Lords, after supper, at home ; and old men, at all hours and places." " And old women ?" interrupted Vaughan.— " Of what are you speaking ?" said the charioteer. Vaughan repeated his question. " Oh, yes ; I now begin to perceive. Old women ! they die nowhere on earth. The fact is, that there is, at present, no such thing as an old woman in the world ; unless it be an old Admiral or General, who talks of the American war ; or an old parliamentary personage, who indulges the table with anecdotes of Pitt and Fox, and the other past and forgotten of mankind. That pallid and dubious figure on the

pony, is one of our most ambitious poets; and strange and absurd enough in his choice of subjects. His last was, 'Human Life!'"

A brilliant equipage now dashed by, and Courtney made his lowest bow to a stern-countenanced woman, with a bronzed cheek, intensely crimsoned, and a pair of wild black eyes. She received his homage with a slight bend, and then shot on like a meteor. "There she goes," said the Cicerone, "at the rate of ten thousand a year, or a week, I forget which. A dazzling creature, no doubt; but monstrously dear. She has, at this moment, a whole forest of oaks, firs, and all other vegetables that can be prevailed on to grow north of the Tweed, in jewels upon her brown neck." "A foreign princess?" inquired Vaughan. "Yes, foreign enough, and

fantastic enough too ;—a princess undoubtedly ; and to-night, you may, if you please, see her in her royal costume, seated upon her throne.” Vaughan smiled. “ An absolute fact,” said Courtney ; “ and you shall see about four thousand of our first fashionables paying the most unbounded homage to her”—“ Sceptre ?” interrupted Vaughan, “ No ; to her heels ! She is the great sublime of the ballet ; the *deesse de l’opera*. You must take a peep literally behind the curtain, my dear fellow ; or such a glance as you obtained just now may answer the purpose as well ; and learn to be surprised at nothing.” Philip was suddenly interrupted by the approach of a veteran beau of the most singular description, who accosted him familiarly as they met, and whom he

introduced by the name of Lord Love-
more. While he was engaged in con-
versation with the peer, Vaughan's
eyes were riveted upon this strange
compound of age, artifice, and effemi-
nacy. Teeth of pearly whiteness, in a
mouth where sixty years could scarcely
have failed to commit the usual ravages ;
—a head not disfigured by a single grey
hair,—a cravat of such enormous di-
mensions as almost to envelope the
chin ; and a bloom upon the withered
cheek, altogether formed a sight too
ludicrous to be resisted ; and Vaughan
found the effort to repress his laughter
so difficult, as to feel heartily glad when
my Lord's farewell bow gave him an
opportunity of indulging it. " There,
now," said Courtney, after they had
parted, " is a man verging on sixty-five ;

but, to walk behind him, you would judge by his taper waist, his stiff collar, his mincing pace, and his lisping tone, that he was scarcely twenty; and his folly pardonable from his youth." "After what I have seen and heard," said Vaughan, "my old uncle's eccentricities will no longer appear a just subject for ridicule. But who is this? No doubt a singular character, and I suspect, his peculiarities, curious they are, at least do no discredit to his heart or understanding." "Come, come, don't be too severe, neither; you are treading on dangerous ground. To let you into a family secret, I have a notion that the worthy peer does not consider himself by any means beyond the age of captivity, and surmise that he even aspires to the honour of becoming my brother-

in-law. Seriously, I believe my sister, Clementina, would look upon herself as greatly disappointed, and not a little ill-used, if she does not one day contrive to make this ancient boy her lord and master. He is rich, and draws near the end of his career; let that be your answer," said Philip. "I have heard the lady say, and certainly, in this instance, have no reason to doubt her sincerity, that the husband is an object of perfect indifference to her. She marries for a certain establishment. Such and such things she must have,—showy routs—splendid equipage—town-house—country-house; all these may certainly be gained by a marriage with Lovemore. The man, to be sure, is a little incumbrance; a certain clog on the estate, but, unfortunately being inseparable,

she is content to throw the man into the bargain, and make the best of her lot, trusting to the rapid advances of time; which, without working any great wonders in her favour, may chance to give her speedy freedom."

CHAPTER VII.

Ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain ;
And e'en while Fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting, asks if this be Joy ?

Goldsmith.

VAUGHAN spent a month in London agreeably enough. He was hurried by his gay cousin from one place of amusement to another, with such giddy rapidity as to leave no hour unoccupied ; but, at length, pleasure began to pall. Novelty had lost some of its charms ; but variety would possibly still have tempted him onwards, had not a day's solitude and freedom opportunely arrived to give him leisure for reflection.

The first thought which naturally occurred to him, was, that there was one article essentially necessary, to keep up an intercourse with the society into which he was introduced, and one of which he had but little command—money. He took a mournful survey of his purse. He found, that at the present rate, the sum which he had calculated upon as sufficient for his expenditure during his residence in London, would not last him above half the time. He fully felt that he had no right to encroach upon his mother's means, nor his uncle's bounty; and that if he found a larger income necessary for his happiness, he must toil for it, before he could acquire a right to spend it. He cast a glance at the handsome and well-furnished apartment in which he was that moment seated. It had been Courtney's choice;

and the choice of a young man of his habits, was, as might be expected, showy and expensive. Philip had besides, his own motives in this affair. He intended Vaughan the honour of supplying him with a convenient lounge. The residence of so near a relative, must be such as would not disgrace his taste in those private parties to which he intended himself the pleasure of inviting his fashionable friends; and, above all, if he could not prevail upon the novice to break through the prudent resolutions which he had laid down for his conduct before temptation came in his way, his purpose in bringing him to London would not be answered. But a brief reflection undid the work of days. Vaughan paced the room with hasty steps. A second glance was more than sufficient to fix his resolution. "These

apartments are ill-calculated for a child of misfortune, like myself," thought he, "whose very existence, whose whole advancement in life depends upon the bounty of another;" and though alone, a burning flush mounted to his cheek as the thought crossed his mind; and overwhelmed him with a bitter sense of shame, and a thorough conviction of his error. He sighed. "I had too much confidence in my own strength.—I am still but too much like the rest of the world, easily dazzled, easily misled." Next to this painful review of himself, he endeavoured to form a juster estimate of his cousin's character; but this was to the full as unpleasant a task. His uncle was evidently deceived; but he was unwilling to tax Philip with intentional deceit. The first entrance of suspicion into a young and ingenuous

mind, is a painful and repulsive feeling ; and in Vaughan's breast it was any thing but a welcome guest. In a word, he had been won by Courtney's manners, and his heart silenced the suggestions of his reason. But a more important point was yet to be gained ; and, as the first step towards his own reformation, he determined to punish himself by a day of solitude devoted to settling his accounts, and laying down a plan of rigid economy for the future. He found the latter a hard task, and solitude more irksome than he had been prepared to expect. It is the misfortune of those once engaged in the pursuit of pleasure, to be tormented with restlessness of spirit. Vaughan became every moment more and more angry with himself. He took up a book—his thoughts were wandering,—the rattle

of the carriages disturbed him. He walked to the window, recognised one or two new-made acquaintances; longed to join them, and sat down to read again with as little interest as before. "Psha," said he, and he threw away the book. "How many days have I passed in company with my mother alone, and desired no other society? Have a few weeks made all this change? But I can write to her at least." He wrote, and found his letter filled with fêtes and operas—the masquerade of last night—and the conversazione of to-morrow. "Yet," he exclaimed, "how can this interest her? She knows nothing of my Lord *A.*, or my Lady *B.*? She will think me a fool and a coxcomb;" and he tore the letter in a thousand pieces. Another shared the same fate. It will never do, thought he; and began an

epistle to his uncle. His ideas still flowed in the same strain, but his patience was exhausted, and he would make no further attempt. "Well," said he, as he folded the letter, "let him see me as I am,—let me not add artifice to my other errors;—if I am in fault, let me have the advantage of hearing a warning voice in time." He had made a bad choice of a confidant; but he had yet to learn the world.

For two days Vaughan rigidly adhered to his plan of solitude, which he found insufferably tedious. On the third, he accidentally encountered his cousin in the streets. "Where have you been hiding yourself?" said Courtney, laughing. "Did you think the world was weary of you, and so resolved to make yourself rare? I assure you, seclusion has not improved your appearance, for

you look grave enough to startle one, and offer no temptations to follow your example."

Francis attempted to stammer a reply, but Courtney interrupted him with, "Come, come, no excuses; I have heaps of engagements for you, to make amends for lost time. In the first place, I, and three or four more, of which number you must make one, intend galloping off to the review at Hounslow, the first thing to-morrow; then, as we return, we take a peep at old Middleton's sale, where you'll see *bijoux* innumerable, and a vast collection of still more curious people; and we'll finish the day by dining *en masse* at your lodgings. It is your turn to play the host now, and let us see how gaily you entertain."

“To-morrow, I am engaged,” said Francis, hesitatingly, “neither will you find me there. I must change my present apartments, even for the short time I remain in London.”

“Why, I should have thought they were handsome enough to suit the most fastidious taste,” was the reply. “But come, don’t look so disconcerted. If you are really engaged to-morrow, my friends and I will not intrude; another day will do as well. But I must not have all my schemes put off in the same way. I have an invitation for you to spend a week at my friend the Marquis Post Obit’s villa,—a charming place—delightful billiard-table—fine stud.—We play, or scamper over the country all day;—drink claret and burgundy till midnight, and dance till daylight.

There's a routine for you! But turn round, and let me have a look at you, for pity's sake. What an object you are? The cut of your coat is at least a fortnight later than the fashion. You actually could not make your appearance!"

"As I never attempted to lead the fashion," said Vaughan, "and as I do not intend to accept my Lord's invitation, I imagine I shall do very well as I am."

"So! what change has come over you?" said Philip, with real surprise. "What spirit moveth you, friend Vaughan, to-day? The fact is, my dear fellow, you have been moralizing yourself into a complete fit of the blue devils! a sort of sentimental fever upon the spirits, of which the sooner you get rid the better; and now you emerge from your seclusion the sublime specimen of a

philosopher of twenty. Is this fair—is this manly?" he added in a graver tone. "You have entered with as much relish as any of us into all our schemes, and now you would turn your back upon all your acquaintance, to laugh at their expense; and will finish by stealing off into the country, to give an account to our old uncle of my unparalleled dissipation. Eh?"

Vaughan repelled such an accusation with all the generous warmth of his nature; but he still felt that it was necessary to be firm.

"I have been moralizing or reflecting, call it which you will," said Francis, "on my present mode of life. I have no right to intrude my present resolutions upon you, but I have at least a right to adhere to them; convinced as I am, that they are founded upon reason."

“Worse and worse! you reason too much for me,” retorted Philip; “but no matter, we may at least be friends, whatever our difference of opinions may be; and I did not come to seek you to part in anger: so you’ll walk with me, just as far as I’m going, and dispose of your time as you think proper afterwards.”

There was no resisting so much frankness and good-humour, at least, so Vaughan thought;—mechanically he took Philip’s arm, and the day ended, as might be supposed under such a compact, much like those which had gone before. How many temptations to extravagance did he resist this day; and how often did he regret having exposed himself to them? How many invitations did he decline? How many false excuses did he make? And

how often did the glow of false shame mount to his cheek?"

"What is this new feeling that oppresses me," said he, when he retired to the solitude of his own chamber. "I am merely endeavouring to keep the course which prudence prescribes to me. I am merely combating the thoughtlessness of my nature.—I have the means of supporting existence but not extravagance.—I see myself outdone; perhaps the jest of a few paltry coxcombs whom I despise.—I cannot launch forth into the character of a man of fashion, and I am weak enough to regret it. I have done no wrong,—I have injured no one.—Of what then am I ashamed? Psha," said he, "am I ashamed of being poor!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Duke. Your mistress, is she lovely ?

Valerio. Fair i' faith

To eyes just come from Barbary.

Duke. Then she is young ?

Valerio. There have been younger maids
That have seen pretty infants on their knee.

Duke. Then she is wise ?

Valerio. Ay, wise as those that think
That they shall trap me into marriage bonds.

Safe bind, Safe find.

“ Nor at home to any one but Lord Lovemore, and one or two others, whose names I could not hear, is my mother's order for to-day,” said Julia Courtney, in a tone of evident displeasure, as she entered the room where Catherine was seated alone, engaged in her favourite amusement of drawing. “ And Frederic Gordon promised to

call here to-day! This it is to be subjected to maternal control! Heigh, ho! my dear, I wish I were my own mistress!" Catherine suspended her employment for a moment, and looked up doubtfully in Julia's face. Julia pursued her soliloquy,—“ My Lord is the hero of the day now with my mother! Every minor consideration gives way to this one important point! Heavens! how Clementina will lord it over us, when she becomes Lady Lovemore! I think I see her with her haughty stare, ready to crush me into insignificance, offering me a seat in her carriage with provoking condescension; and inviting me to her nights with such a patronising air. Oh, insupportable! Gordon and I will never be able to enter the lists with her! When I think of those things, do you know, I'm half

sorry I have suffered this silly business to proceed so far. Ambition flutters round my heart, and seems to tempt it to turn traitor." "No, no," said Catherine, earnestly, laying her hand upon her cousin's arm, "such inconsistency is not in your nature! I know you better than to believe you are capable of following your sister's steps, and sacrificing all to ambition. Consider a moment,—are all the toys which Clementina will purchase by her marriage worth the price which she will pay for them?" "I believe not," said Julia, hesitatingly; "you plead Gordon's cause eloquently—well, my lot must be speedily decided. But why that look of consternation; are you startled at the effect of your influence?" "No," returned Catherine, "but startled to see you form such hasty decisions in an affair of so much importance.

Gordon's prospects are anything but flattering, at present. Is there no medium between utter desertion, and plunging headlong into difficulty? Time may work a change in his favour.—His exertions may ultimately prove successful,—his father's heart may soften towards him, can you not wait the result!" "Oh! say no more of it, my dear; I'm not in a humour to listen to a lecture just now. Did I not forbid him to think of me any more? Can I help it, if the man is obstinate, and will not obey me? And did I not tell him distinctly, that I began to detest him? Can I help it, if he will not believe me? Oh! yes; Time may work a change in *his* favour, but it will work none in mine," she continued as she surveyed herself in a large mirror. "A few more years in this world of dissipation, and I

shall become ugly, artificial, and almost as heartless as Clementina herself! Will Gordon's constancy stand such a test, think you? But, to start something new, what think you of this new arrival—this country cousin—this peerless rustic—this Vaughan?" Catherine bent her head over her drawing, dipped her brush hastily in the pallet, and muttered a few indistinct phrases, in which the word "indifferent," was the most audible. "Heavens!" said Julia, laughing, "my question was very *mal-a-propos* just then. I quite forgot the nature of your employment! Come, come, you have totally spoilt your beautiful drawing,—you may as well burn it at once and thank me for contributing to its destruction!" "Really," interrupted Catherine, "you are most provoking.

This cousin of your's is nothing to me!" "I'll engage he's of a different opinion," said Julia, laughing; there never was a man in this world that had not as large a share of vanity as—as—a woman! But I had forgotten to tell you, Philip informs me that this rural swain has already taken fright at the specimen he has seen of our town-life, and afraid of being contaminated by the sight of so much dissipation,—is for making a hasty retreat into the country. But I find a much more natural cause for his determination, and pronounce him afraid of losing his heart, is it so, my sweet coz?" "I see nothing very extraordinary," said Catherine, suddenly recovering her self-possession, "in this; he never intended making a very long stay in London, and after having pro-

tracted his departure much beyond his original intention, is it at all surprising that he should at length fix the time for his return?" "There is no throwing you off your guard," said Julia, a little chagrined, "no surprising you into an expression of human feeling. With your caution,—you and Vaughan would be the best matched pair in Christendom. What I complain of in your paragon is, his unnatural prudence. I hate a man that does every thing by rule,—that even falls in love with mathematical precision,—sees his danger at every step he takes, and then retreats with as much caution as he advanced. Gordon and I will dash through the world in another style. But here comes Martha, to give a turn to our thoughts. Now we shall have all the scandal of the last night's ball."

“ Oh, Ladies! ” said Martha, laughing as she entered, “ have you heard of Seraphina’s adventure? She’ll hold her head so high, there will be no enduring her for a week to come, at least!” “ I think I had a hint from my mother,” returned Julia, “ but let us have your edition of the tale. “ Seraphina, as usual,” resumed Martha, “ had danced but one quadrille. You know, it is an established principle with her, that to do more argues a state of robust health, quite foreign to the delicacy and sensibility of her nature. She pleaded fatigue, and placed herself in a contemplative attitude. Her partner, a man of exquisite gallantry, seated himself beside her, and announced the same intention, much to the discomfiture of several damsels; for he was a most captivating person, and quite the magnet of

the night. Seraphina enjoyed her triumph,—

‘ She looked a goddess, and she moved a queen.’

She played off her whole artillery of sentiment.—He was an adept in the art of admiration; they sate in a conspicuous corner of the room, apart from the general group, quite picturesque—every eye turned upon them. The scene was worth a season of quadrilles. My mother was on thorns,—could scarcely hold her cards, and lost every game. At the first moment she could, she flew from the card-table, and drew Seraphina aside. ‘ Seraphina, my love, you are making yourself quite ridiculous, every one is looking at you.—Who is that man?’ Seraphina contrived to set all at rest, by a mysterious but satisfactory whisper, of which I could just hear,

‘Sir Mark Thornton—estate in Yorkshire—ten thousand a-year!’ Without a word in reply, my mother turned and resumed her seat. Sir Mark returned to his station, and the Seraphina was allowed to make herself as happy and absurd as she pleased for the rest of the evening.

“But the best part of the affair is, that Sir Mark is said to be actually paying his serious devoirs in another quarter.” “Then, the kindest thing you could do by her,” said Catherine, “would be to undeceive her.” “I undeceive her?” said Martha, “not for the world! She is in Elysium at this moment; and to undeceive her would be to deprive her of some very agreeable hours. I have not cruelty enough for those things. But here comes Gordon. What’s the countersign to-day, Julia;

to be admitted or not?—he'll hardly escape exclusion, for I overheard a charitable dowager last night inform Mrs. Courtney that his father was more incensed against him than ever. I was right—there he goes—poor fellow, how dejectedly he walks away.”

“ ’Tis no matter,” said Julia, looking after him; “tyranny like this only incites one to be more fertile in expedients. I shall find an opportunity of letting him know that it was not by my order that he was refused admittance. Heigho! I wish I were my own mistress!” concluding as she began:

CHAPTER IX.

Innocence shall make
False accusation blush, and tyranny
Tremble at patience.—*Shakspeare.*

“ I WONDER what has become of young Vaughan ; we have not seen him this week past ? ” said Mrs. Courtney, one morning, “ and I am sure that *is* cause for surprise. I wish he were gone to college, with all my heart. The company of an angel would begin to weary one unless his visits were, as angel visits are said to be, ‘ few and far between. ’ ”

“ You must ask Catherine,” said Martha, “ I’ll answer for it, she can give you the best information as to his move-

ments, for they are always together,—always in some secret conference,—have you not observed it?”

“Poh,” said Mrs. Courtney, carelessly, “it is not worth observing,—let them enjoy themselves,—it would be a suitable match,—beggar with beggar, and an easy way of getting rid of both. Let them marry for love if they like, and live upon it if they can.”

“I’ll engage,” continued Martha, “they’ll find some more substantial means of existence for all that. Catherine has more shrewdness than you give her credit for. Depend upon it, that she knows more of Vaughan’s prospects than you do. I should laugh amazingly if she were in the secret the whole time, and were to secure the true heir for herself! I am sure, nothing can be more plain. Catherine and my

brother were *once* the best friends imaginable ; now they are exquisitely reserved whenever they meet. It is only a little pardonable inconstancy on the lady's part. The other scale preponderates, and she has altered her views."

There was just a sufficient mixture of truth and falsehood in the statement, to give an air of probability to the whole. In the days of Catherine's prosperity, Courtney had contemplated the prospect of her father's return, a wealthy Indian, and the fortune which she might expect, offered an easy method of repairing his own. Colonel Greville's late mysterious silence had given the alarm to his sordid relative, and Catherine, though wholly unconscious of his matrimonial plans, could not avoid being hurt at the change, and naturally repaid his in-

creasing coldness with a proud and marked indifference.

“ I had never seen the matter in this light, I own,” said Mrs. Courtney, in a voice of serious alarm. “ A pretty scheme to enter into an inexperienced head of seventeen, but I’ll settle the business, and speedily too. Does any one know where she is ? ” and she ordered her to be summoned. Catherine did not make her appearance directly, and when she did, she came drest for a morning walk, full of gaiety and good-humour, and totally unprepared for the storm that threatened.

“ Where are you going in such high spirits, young lady, may I take the liberty to ask ? ” said Mrs. Courtney, haughtily. Catherine, awed by her tone, replied timidly, “ Julia, Mr. Vaughan, and myself,—” she hesitated. “ We are going

to the exhibition, and several other places, I think. We shall be out all day." "A pretty trio, and a fine *exhibition* you'll make of it. If you had condescended to have asked my advice on the subject, you had saved yourself much trouble. As it is, you will have the goodness to make up your mind to remain at home. I can hear of no rambles with such an escort.—Have you no regard to appearances?"

"But, dear aunt, we have promised, and we expect Mr. Vaughan every moment."

"A promise given without my permission, was made to be broken," said Mrs. Courtney. "Let me tell you, young lady, that in your father's absence, (and would to Heaven he were returned to free me from such a responsibility,) I am your sole guardian;—

what would the world say of me if I were to authorize such indiscretion?"

"There is little danger, Madam," said Catherine, smiling, "that the world would take the trouble of inquiring into the conduct of such humble personages as ourselves!"

"I beg, Madam," interrupted Mrs. Courtney, hastily, "that when you are seized with such a sudden fit of humility, you will at least leave *my* family out of the question, and even take into consideration your own relationship to myself. *My* connexions are extremely well known, and you can scarcely appear anywhere without a chance of being recognised. And to go yet farther, should your father ever return, how should I answer it to the world, my conscience, or him, to suffer you to

elude my vigilance, and throw yourself away upon a beggar?"

"There is little danger of that, Madam," said Catherine, pointedly; "I have experienced too many of the evils of poverty to run any risk of voluntarily encountering it."

There was something ambiguous in this reply, to Mrs. Courtney's prejudiced ear, and she directly gave it her own interpretation.

"It is as I suspected," she burst forth. "You know more than I do.—I understand you.—You run no risk of encountering poverty with Vaughan.—He has gained the old man's ear, and you are to share his prosperity. An admirable scheme, and worthy of its contriver!"

At this cruel accusation the poor girl

burst into tears. "You have gained one point, at least, Madam," she said. "You have deprived me of the power of disputing your commands, for you have left me neither spirit nor inclination to mingle in cheerful scenes to-day." As she spoke, her cheek crimsoned, and a sense of the injustice with which she was treated, roused a feeling which she could no longer suppress.

"I must leave you," she continued, as she advanced towards the door; "to so unjust a suspicion it were idle to reply; but one word before we part.—Your last expressions, Madam, have betrayed the real motive of your prohibition, and taught me how to value your counsel. You need be under no apprehension of my eluding your vigilance.—There is no danger of my being put to the trial; but if, at a future time, I were

to marry imprudently, or unhappily, the sin be on another head ; and this, the only excuse I could make to my father or my conscience, the *want*, which I am made to feel every day of my life, the *cruel* want of a home."

" Dear Catherine," said Julia, affectionately, as she returned to the room where they had been sitting, " you have been in tears—some harsh expression of my mother's has again disturbed you, but you know her."

" You have guessed rightly,—I do not affect to deny it. My aunt has forbidden an innocent indulgence, but it is not the paltry disappointment,—it is not the prohibition, but the manner of it, her cruel insinuations, which have hurt me so deeply. But it is not to you that I should complain."

" Dearest cousin, you grieve me,"

said Julia, with unaffected sincerity; “your situation is painful, but bear with it for awhile. These days may pass away sooner than you think of; I may perhaps marry before you, and the first stipulation I should make with my husband, would be, that in my house there should always be a home for you. I think I can form a pretty near conjecture as to the nature of those insinuations to which you allude, but as I am the physician, I must hear the whole case fairly stated, before I can propose a remedy.”

Catherine had scarcely made the necessary explanation, when Vaughan was seen at the door.

“What excuse shall I invent, or shall I tell him the whole truth; explain my mother’s fears, and bid him be gone, and show his dangerous face here no more?” said Julia, laughing.

“Hush, you wild girl,” said Catherine, in real alarm, placing her hand before her cousin’s mouth.

When Vaughan entered, the traces of tears in Catherine’s face, the subdued smile of Julia, and the evident embarrassment of both perplexed him.

“I will tell all, positively, if you leave it to me,” said the provoking Julia; “the truth, and the whole truth.” Vaughan expressed surprise.

“Ask that lady,” continued she, “I am excessively awkward at inventing excuses, and, besides, am not altogether so submissive; and when my schemes of amusement are defeated in one instance, my brain’s on the rack, till I can invent another; so I’ll leave you to entertain each other,” and she tripped away.

“Now, if she was not quite so giddy, if

I may venture to use such an expression," said Vaughan, as she closed the door, "Julia Courtney would be one of the most charming creatures in the world."

"No, you must not judge her too severely," said Catherine, "she affects more thoughtlessness than belongs to her character, and disguises feelings which honour her. She has a *heart* superior to her manners; there is not a kinder one in the world. I have reason to say so. But for her,—" and she broke off abruptly, afraid of giving utterance to feelings which at that moment overpowered her.

"You are disturbed Miss Greville," said Francis, gently, "something has distressed you.—If my presence embarrass you, I will leave you; but I own," he hesitated, "I am unwilling to go, if it is in my power to offer any service."

“ I will acknowledge,” said she, half averting her head, “ there is something on my mind which renders me almost unfit for society. You have probably perceived, that my situation in this family is any thing but pleasant. It is daily becoming more insupportable. My aunt, a slave where it suits her purpose, is a tyrant to those within her grasp. The expression is a strong one; but it is authorized by the treatment which I receive.” The tears flowed afresh.—“ Some new act of injustice has roused this natural and virtuous indignation. Let me know all, and the world shall go hard with me, but I will find the means of protecting you from it,” said Francis, with generous warmth. “ Perhaps I take these things too much to heart,” returned Catherine: “ but a sense of dependence renders the feel-

ings acute. From caprice or ill-nature, my aunt has forbidden our excursion of to-day. It is the tone and manner with which she enforced her commands, which I find it so hard to endure. The most cruel insinuations—but what am I saying? The substance of her charges,” continued Catherine, weeping at the recollection, “it would not interest you to hear; but you have seen enough of Mrs. Courtney, to be aware that the object of her incessant persecution cannot fail to be miserable.”—“I have seen enough of her to know,” said Francis, indignantly, “that she has not the heart to be generous, and that the protection which she extends must be any thing but sincere.”—“It must be confessed,” said Catherine, with a sigh and a smile, “that men are the more fortunate portion of this world at least. Woman has

no chance but to struggle on through a life of trial, and, it may be, to die in the struggle. To man, how many professions, how many resources, are open: what noble opportunities lie, for instance, before a soldier; if he does his duty, be his rank or fortune what they may, the proudest eye in the land can have no right to look down upon him."

—"True," said he, animated by her remark: "you have painted the profession in its genuine colours, you have more than ever confirmed my resolution of adopting it. Our situations are alike; our tastes should be the same."

"What have I said, what have I done?" cried Catherine, vainly endeavouring to conceal her agitation. "Do not think of it. *You* have prospects before you; an uncle that loves you, a kind parent, and a natural home. I have none of those:

our circumstances are not alike. Be persuaded," she continued, with increased feeling, "and do not break—;" she paused; and added, in a suppressed voice, "your mother's heart."—"It is our mutual misfortune," returned Francis, "that our fates bear too close a resemblance. It is this cruel similitude which deprives me of the power that my heart is longing to possess, the power of serving you. But something must be thought of. I am on the eve of quitting London; but I cannot leave you till some plan has been adopted more conducive to your future comfort. My mother is kind and generous. In her house you must seek an asylum, and with her find that protection and friendship which you will never meet with here." But scarcely had this unguarded speech, inspired by the feelings of the

moment, passed his lips, than the recollection that his mother was yet to be consulted, and that her circumstances were not such as to warrant his even naming it to her, flashed across his mind. Catherine saw and pitied his embarrassment. "I feel at the same moment," she replied, "the kindness which dictates, and the obstacles which forbid, my accepting such a proposal. No; my education has been liberal. The few acquirements which I possess were not indeed bestowed upon me for the purposes to which I intend to turn them; but it may be but a temporary trial. I am too proud to submit to contumely; but not too proud to use the only means in my power for asserting my independence."—"It must not be, it cannot be," said Francis, thrown completely off his guard; "it would break

my heart to see you thus. Promise me at least, that you will do nothing further till you hear from me. You were not born to be the slave of another's will, the victim of—but—but I have no right—I ought not to interfere with a scheme so honourable to yourself, since I can think of nothing, can offer nothing better." He walked to the window, breathless with emotion. "What am I saying: I shall betray myself," he exclaimed, almost unconsciously uttering his thoughts aloud: "no matter; it is already done."

After a short silence, which neither had the power to break, he turned to Catherine, whose cheek burning with intense agitation, and eye fixed upon the ground, showed that his words had been deeply understood. He took her passive hand. "I have gone too far, dear girl,"

said he, in a tone that unconsciously sank almost to a whisper. "I had no right to put you to this pain. Your feelings should have been sacred to me. I ask no promise. I am about to seek my chance of fortune through the world. But may I say it, the highest delight of success, the noblest triumph that the world could offer would be the power of lightening the least of your sorrows." "This is rashness, enthusiasm," sighed Catherine, without raising her eyes. "Ay, madness, if you will," said Vaughan. "But here, Catherine, dearest girl! Catherine, I offer my love!" His voice passed away, as he pronounced the words; his eye was fixed on her. The dark hair had fallen thickly over the cheek that glowed through it: he drew the tresses aside, and saw it suddenly grow as pale as death. Her hand was

still clasped in his: he felt her shudder and give way. Her lips quivered; but she could not utter a word. Vaughan was in terror: he flung open the door of the conservatory, the gush of fragrance from rose and myrtle revived her, and she listened with the strange and mysterious delight of a happy dream to the romantic eloquence of first love. At length her habitual presence of mind returned. "Mr. Vaughan!" He suddenly dropped her hand at the coldness of the name. Catherine smiled: "Well—Francis!—if it must be so; I can pardon the past; but on the single condition, that it must not occur again. I have been unwise; perhaps we both want to learn wisdom on some matters. But I absolve you from all promises." He gazed on her reproachfully. "I mean," said she, "from all promises that you find it at all

embarrassing to keep. Let us have done on this subject. We have others to consult. You have a mother. I, if Providence in its mercy so will, a dear father." She wiped away a tear, and as she raised her dark eyes to heaven, with a look between resignation and hope, with her white hands faintly clasped together, and her lip trembling with unuttered prayer, Vaughan gazed upon her, as he would upon an angel in the act of adoration. At this moment, the door was thrown open, and Mrs. Courtney almost burst into the room. "So," said she, "just as I thought. Pray, Miss Greville, how long has this gentleman been here?" Some general answer was returned. "Well, well," continued the angry lady of the mansion, "I presume you have exhausted all your morning topics; and I now wish to have some

conversation in my turn." Catherine fled from the room like a frightened faun, giving, as she parted, an imploring glance at Vaughan, to restrain his evident irritation. We shall not detail the conversation that followed. The lady had by much the greater part of it to herself. It was alternately prudence, persuasion, and menace ; the avoidance of paying boyish attentions to girls not come to years of discretion ; the dangers of a continued residence in town ; and the follies of a continued residence in the country. On the whole, she considered the army the very finest, most pleasant, and most promising for a young man. The age was military ; the public munificence was all turned upon soldiership. There were certainly occasional hazards, from climate and other casualties ; but of those a brave man

took no account, and those were surmounted every day. Her advice was, Heaven knew it, given with a reluctant heart ; but she felt for his situation, anxiously, deeply felt for it, and from the bottom of her heart could wish to see his name in the next gazette. The lady was eloquent ; Vaughan open to conviction. But half her eloquence was unheard, while he was conjuring up the vision of Catherine in her chamber, friendless, and lovely, and weeping over the sullen prospect of a life, which he would be too far away to cheer. Her smile rose before him soft, sweet, and innocent ; the brown ringlets again clustered over her cheek richer than roses ; the splendid eye again shone, full of the spirit of that Heaven on which it gazed ; and he half worshipped the image which his fancy had made.

That night was sleepless. He was fevered with distracting thoughts. "Had he not been rash in his declaration to the woman of his heart; was he not binding her in vows which she might yet wish to break; was there not such a thing as female inconstancy? His profession too, was it not almost fixed already by his uncle? How should he answer for the pain which his only parent would feel at his going into the army, a career of which he knew her habitual dread. Was Mrs. Courtney's advice sincere, when he knew her hardness, selfishness, and duplicity of soul? If he fell, where was Catherine's hope of evading the difficulties of her forlorn life?" As the first step to coolness of thought, he determined to leave London

CHAPTER X.

They that have grown old in a single state are generally found to be morose, fretful, and captious—tenacious of their own practices and manners, soon offended by contradiction or negligence, and impatient of any association, but with those that will watch their nod, and submit themselves to unlimited authority.

Dr. Johnson.

ON rising, he immediately began his preparations for the journey. He had not been long employed, when a knock at the door announced Courtney.

He entered laughing. “Then the news is true,” said he; “London air is too thick for the delicacy of your feelings; or are you out of purse, or out of favour with some love or other, which of course your pastoral nature thinks

the much worse evil of the two?" — "None of those," returned Vaughan; "but I am under an absolute necessity of returning to Halston-Hall. I have some important business there; a point to carry, which must be settled without loss of time." Courtney's gaiety forsook him at once; and looking in his cousin's face, "Have you had the news by letter?" and he caught up a letter which Vaughan had written to convey his farewell to Catherine. The direction caught his eye; his countenance turned livid, and his teeth gnashed. It was but the emotion of a moment, and he laid the letter on the table unopened as he had taken it up. Vaughan was still busy assisting his servant in packing. "Come now, be sincere; was the news by express?—is the old fellow dying?—is he dead." Vaughan turned in surprise:

“Dead! who?”—“Curse his cunni !” muttered Courtney: “we have been ousted completely.” He turned to his cousin, “Are you going to take possession of the Hall?”—“Yes,” was the answer. Courtney darted a look of fury at him, and was about to rush out of the room; Vaughan caught hold of him. “What, in the name of all extravagance, is the matter with you this morning, Philip?”—“I am going to take possession of my old bed-chamber, and no more, for just two days; and after that, if I can obtain my uncle’s leave, going to perhaps a bed-chamber where the sky is the canopy, and where men sleep without disturbing their relatives.”—“The old fellow still alive; a commission; the very thing!” and Courtney, starting from his reverie, shook the future soldier’s hand, with more than feigned

eagerness. “Your purpose is manly and honourable. Luckless dog that I am, I must be confined to this wretchedly inactive life at home, while you are gathering laurels, my boy. You’ll cut us all out when you return. But”—and he took a turn through the room in thought—“you are going to the hall; egad—I now recollect, I have business there, put off too long, ‘a truant disposition, good, my Lord;’ I will have the curriele with you in ten minutes, and we will go together.”

Courtney’s inclination for the journey subsided, as Vaughan became more communicative. He saw still more clearly, that nothing could be more favourable to his own views, than to encourage his cousin’s predilection for the army, as affording the fairest means in the world for getting him completely out of the way.

The chances were, that they might never meet again during his uncle's lifetime, and in his rival's absence he might regain his former influence. Vaughan, delighted at the interest which he appeared to take in his concerns, and pleased at receiving advice so consonant to his wishes, overlooked the selfishness which dictated it. There was something so friendly in his tone and manner, that from one communication Vaughan was irresistibly led on to another. It occurred to him that he might make him the confidant of his affection for Catherine, and the bearer of the letter, which he could find no other means of conveying. Little did he guess in what dangerous hands he was placing his secret. "Give your word not to divulge my secret; for your mother—excuse me, Philip—you know;

your mother"——“ Oh, yes,” said Philip, laughing, “ she has a lynx’s eye, but you have told me nothing new in this, for I more than suspected it before ; however, your secret’s safe, and if I can do any thing to serve you or your fair one, rely upon me.” A servant now brought in a letter which had been sent from his house ; he glanced it over, seemed surprised, and suddenly recollecting an engagement in town, begged Vaughan to apologize to his uncle, and bade him a hasty adieu.

The old man received his nephew with kindness, but some surprise ; for he had taken his resolution so suddenly, as to have no time to warn his uncle of his intentions. “ I should rather have expected to have heard of your being on the road to Oxford by this time, than to have seen you here,

young man," said he gravely.—"Yes, sir," returned Francis, "but having a day or two to spare, I abridged my stay in London to pay my respects to you, and also to consult you on a subject near my heart, and which I could not so well explain by letter."—"A subject near your heart! what have you to do with affairs of the heart at present? No foolish love business, I hope; if so, I warn you, you have chosen a wrong confidant."—"No, sir, you mistake," said Francis, evidently embarrassed. "I am thinking, sir," at length, he said, "that it will cost you a heavy sum to maintain me at college for the three years it was your intention that I should remain there"—"O, poh, poh—is that the result of your reflections?" said the old man fretfully; "it is all true, but that is not a point to be considered

now. It is all settled, man.” “But I thought it right, sir, before I took my departure, to inform you, that my prepossession in favour of a military life is still the same, and likely to remain so. I have weighed the arguments on all sides. The Church, the Law, and Commerce, have all been severally proposed. The Church is too inactive, the others are too laborious. There is a drudgery, an up-hill labour connected with these last; and all of them offer but few allurements to a man without prospect or fortune; they are too slow for my ambition.”—“Ambition—drudgery—what new-fangled words are these? Hah!” said the old man tartly, “let me tell you, young man, ambition is not necessary to get on in the world; perseverance is a great deal better. You must be content to do as others have

done before you. I began the world, sir, pretty much like yourself,—without a penny; ay, without a penny, and I may venture to say, almost without a friend; but I toiled early and late, denied myself all idle pleasures, was at the desk from sun-rise till moon-light,—my fingers cramped, my face pale, my brain addled with incessant application;—always calculating, always busy, sir, and always at hand when any thing was to be done at a moment. Drudgery! I had enough of that; but here I am in my old age, and long before old age came upon me, independent, sir, and with, as you see, money to spare.—Genius, boy, genius is not required to make a fortune. An indefatigable spirit will do more in a twelvemonth than one of your lazy geniuses in a life; and as to advancement, you'll find that to

the full as slow in the military line as in any other, I fancy.”—“Possibly, sir, but, in a life so varied and interesting, I could wait with greater patience the reward of my services; and at the worst, should promotion be slower and my disappointment more severe than I had anticipated, there are ten chances to one that a friendly bullet may rid me of all further anxiety.”—“Where did you learn this language, pray? Don’t conjure up such fancies; it’s an insult to me—it’s flying in the face of Providence. I had hoped to let nature take its course, and have gone down to the grave before you,” murmured the old man. “Well, Sir,” said Francis, affected, yet pleased, by his emotion, “I will not pain you by urging the point; but one word more—I have eased my conscience of the weight which oppressed it—I feel convinced that the

money which you have set apart for my use was intended to contribute to my happiness, and I would merely represent to you, that that purpose would be much sooner gained by the purchase of a commission.”—“ Well, this is fair, this is manly,” said his uncle, with a smile ; “ there is something I like about this, sir—but I am an old man, and must be a little obstinate. You shall spend one twelvemonth at college, and if you still hold the same mind—why, there is no struggling with fate—and you shall have the commission after all.”

CHAPTER XI.

“How quickly nature falls into revolt
When gold becomes her object !
For this the foolish over-careful fathers
Have broke their sleep with thoughts, their brains
with care,
Their hours with industry.”—*Shakspeare.*

THIS arrangement being made, a week saw Vaughan established at Oxford.

His uncle's generosity made him consider it as a duty to endeavour to combat his own inclination, and, if possible, ultimately to give into his views. He resolved to turn his mind to study, form but few acquaintance, and extinguish, if possible, the spirit-stirring enthusiasm within, which perpetually whispered of drums and trumpets, adventure

and glory. To his resolution of solitude he did not find it so difficult to adhere ; for amongst those with whom it was now his lot to mingle, he found few with whom he felt any desire to become acquainted. But he missed the society of Courtney. It had become almost essential. There was a lifeless monotony in his present existence, trying to him. In the hour of study, his books were his companions, and he had learnt, at such moments, to desire no other ; but in the hour of relaxation, he felt the want of some associate with whom he could unbend his mind. The necessity of confiding in some one person appears a feeling implanted in our nature ; and to converse on indifferent subjects when the mind is occupied with one, is an art difficult to be acquired by old or young. He was long without find-

ing a substitute for his absent friend. But there was one amongst his young companions, to whom a similarity of feelings drew him more closely than the rest. George Mordaunt was universally acknowledged to be the most well-meaning fellow in the world. Vaughan soon perceived that there was this difference between him and Courtney; he never refused a service that was in his power to perform; he was liberal to a fault; his purse was as open as his heart. To his ready and genuine kindness, Vaughan could not long remain insensible, and he and Mordaunt became, by insensible degree, companions; but he soon perceived that all his excellent qualities was obscured by one fatal drawback, a total absence of discretion. It never entered Mordaunt's head, that one whose intentions were so good as his own, could

have any occasion for reserve. The freedom with which he told his own concerns often astonished and amused his circle, but, unfortunately, his friend's secret was as unsafe in his possession as his own. Those who knew his good-natured and friendly spirit, only laughed at his thoughtless frankness, until it more nearly concerned themselves, and they could then join in the general voice of condemnation; but the more designing took advantage of his foible, to forward their personal views. Mordaunt was heir to large property, and could afford to be sometimes duped—but instead of profiting by experience, he only laughed at caution, and pursued the same course as before. “How could you be so ill-natured, Mordaunt,” said one of his fellow-students one day, in the presence of Vaughan, “as to

blunder out to the proctor that I was out last night. When I transgress in future, I shall take care to keep out of your way.”—“ I beg you ten thousand pardons, my dear fellow,” returned Mordaunt, “ I totally forgot that we live by rule in this confounded college.”—“ Psha, the old *excuse*,” returned the other ; “ yes, yes, we all know you to be a good fellow enough ; but of what consequence is that to me now ? I tell you, Vaughan,” he continued, “ this is but one of a thousand tricks this fellow has played me. To give you an instance ; I have an old aunt, from whom I have expectations, who you may suppose is the most tedious being in the world, but whose favour I should entirely lose, were I to abandon her entirely : so I content myself with one visit, and three or four letters of apology in the course of

the year. The very last which I wrote to her was something in the same strain; *viz.*, hard work—incessant preparation would confine me to College, even during the vacation—could not possibly find time,” &c. and would have answered the same purpose as those which had preceded it, but for my obliging friend here, who let out the very next time he saw her, that he and I had been spending six agreeable weeks at Brighton, by way of relaxation after our fatigues; when next I make an excursion, I shall choose another companion. You may despise my caution or not as you please, Vaughan; but I give you this timely warning, that a careless friend is as dangerous as an open enemy.”—“Poh, don’t mind him,” said Vaughan to Mordaunt, who looked a little graver than usual at the rebuke, “don’t mind

him," he repeated, as the offended student closed the door, "he is the most perfect cynic of the age;" but in after life, when circumstances recalled this little incident to his mind, he had reason to acknowledge the justice of the Oxonian's remark. "Well, but—but to the point," said Mordaunt, recovering his good humour by the observation, "what were you going to say?"—"I had nothing further to add," resumed his friend, perhaps a little checked in his communications by what he had just heard. "Oh, poh—a little intimidated—don't like to trust me, perhaps," said Mordaunt; "but no matter, we'll not quarrel upon that subject. If I had an uncle as generous as your's, and as willing to oblige me, I should certainly take him at his word, and not waste so favourable an opportunity by

standing on a point of ceremony. What can the old know of the feelings of the young? Let him purchase the commission, and have done with it. Besides, take my word, if your uncle is serious in his intention, he will grant your request as well now as a twelve-month hence. Now's the time for improving your fortune; the very time for promotion. Should peace be proclaimed in a year or two, then come the horrors of half-pay; add to which, your uncle is ancient, and may die before you claim his promise; and do you think his heir, whoever he be, would be inclined to make up the loss to you?" The thought had more than once occurred. "Unless," concluded Mor-daunt, "you have the good-luck to be the heir yourself."—"Not I; I have no such thought. I have reason to think

that my prospects would close with my uncle's death ; and whatever might be the inclinations of the heir, I suspect it would not be in his power to serve me," his mind reverting to more than a suspicion which he entertained of Courtney's pecuniary embarrassments. Unwilling to perplex himself by thinking more upon the subject, his resolution was taken ; and without delay he wrote to his uncle. The letter was scarcely despatched, when, with the inconsistency of human nature, he regretted having written. What would his uncle think of so impatient a spirit? Might he not altogether retract his promise? Should his request be granted, then came the thought of the unprotected state in which he must leave Catherine ; no plan yet devised for her ; and lastly, the disappointed hopes of his mother. " Yet it is

for their sake that I am impatient to begin my career. Could I see them settled beneath the same roof, I could leave England, I think, almost with pleasure." He had received one letter from Courtney, in which he mentioned that his family had left town as usual for the season, and that the haste in which these arrangements had been made had deprived Catherine of the opportunity of prosecuting her scheme for the present. He had heard nothing since, and became most anxious to hear more, when a second letter of Courtney's arrived, more unwelcome than even his silence.

It was a request to borrow a sum of money large enough to startle him, and in a name to which he could refuse nothing. "It was for Miss Greville—the means of supplying her at that moment were not available—she was infinitely

reluctant to apply, but the case was urgent, and the money should be returned in a few days." Courtney had repeatedly borrowed small sums of him to his great inconvenience, but the punctuality of the payment had disarmed him of all fear, and he had lent as freely as it was asked; but the present sum appeared enormous—and what Catherine could want with it, living beneath her aunt's roof, amazed him. "Poor girl," thought he, "her aunt is narrow, nay, parsimonious to her, and yet expects her to maintain an appearance equal to that of her daughters. Dress has, without doubt, its temptation to one so young, and debts may have accumulated unawares." In short, the heart invented the excuses, however little the head might sanction them.

Yet he felt in some measure disap-

pointed in her ; and, was he ever so much disposed to grant her request, where was he to find the means ? Once he thought of writing to Catherine upon the subject, and explaining to her his inability, notwithstanding his inclination to serve her ; but he reflected that she had chosen another agent from unwillingness to appear in the business, and it might hurt her feelings to adopt this plan. While he stood painfully deliberating, a letter from his uncle was put into his hands. He tore it open with wild impetuosity, but the enclosure which it contained silenced his doubts before he had time to read it. It was the exact sum necessary for the purchase of the commission. He examined the note again and again : he could scarcely believe his senses. This prompt compliance was more than he had ex-

pected. When he came to read the letter itself, he was not quite so well satisfied. It struck him that there was something unusually cold in the style—a something which seemed to intimate—“A sense of honour has influenced me. You have broken your word, but I will be true to mine. Expect nothing further from me.” Yet this might be all visionary ; it might be his uncle’s unostentatious mode of conferring a favour, or merely a fit of momentary vexation.

“Philip must have had some insight into this business. He must have known my uncle’s intention, and it is this that has induced him to apply to me, and it is for Catherine. I had rather lose it all than disappoint her. It is only delaying the purchase a few days.” The decision was made, the money enclosed, and Francis Vaughan almost as poor as

before. In a day or two he received a hasty line from Philip acknowledging the receipt of the money, and overwhelming him with thanks and protestations in his own name and Miss Greville's, and assurances of not remaining long in his debt. Day after day, and week after week passed on, yet still he heard nothing further. The secret of his distress he confided to none. He wandered about restless and unhappy. Mor-daunt saw that something disturbed him, and was incessant in his affectionate inquiries to know the result of his application; but prudential and honourable motives alike determined him upon maintaining a rigid silence.

He was in this frame of mind, when a letter from Mr. Vaughan inquiring into the cause of his delay, increased his perplexity. "You could not let me.

rest," he wrote. "You were all anxiety, all enthusiasm in the prosecution of this darling scheme,—and now, it is no sooner in your power, than you linger irresolutely without taking any steps towards its completion. This boyish inconsistency is not what I expected from you. You would do well to write immediately, and exculpate yourself." The receipt of this letter plunged Francis into absolute despair. He had no resource. What reply could he make to so just an accusation? How had his uncle's generosity been repaid. He wrote to Philip, enclosing his uncle's letter, and requesting him to relieve him from so unpleasant a situation, by an immediate payment of the debt. Philip replied by many expressions of regret, that the money being disposed of, it was not in his power at that moment to

return it as he intended; he had no idea that the case was so pressing; thought that he intended to remain a little longer at college; advised him to persuade his uncle to this measure; tell him, that he was convinced by his arguments, and thus coax him into a little necessary delay; and in the course of a few months he should be in a condition to discharge the obligation; at all events, happen what would, he entreated him, as he valued his honour, not to betray in what manner the money had been employed. Vaughan's eyes began to be opened to his character. But reflecting on the subject was idle; the point was to act. He could not follow this man's advice. There appeared a meanness in it which surprised him. Yet he could not remain where he was; he was doing nothing—worse than nothing. There was an oppression upon

his spirit which he could not bear. "But I will not add guilt to folly, deceit to imprudence," said he: "I cannot write upon this unfortunate subject,—nor can I submit to leave the country like a criminal; I cannot thus requite my uncle's generosity. I will tell him all—no, not all, but enough to criminate myself, and not my friend."

"I am going to leave college," said he to Mordaunt, "and shall probably return to it no more. I have met with a disappointment which has distressed me." "I can in part guess its nature," replied Mordaunt. "Come be candid. Can I serve you? I can be secret on occasion. But I am off for London; where is the letter of introduction which you promised me to your relatives there?" Francis hesitated, for his opinion had somewhat altered since the offer of this

introduction, and he trembled for Mordaunt's purse. "You shall have it, my dear fellow," said he; "but one word of advice—don't be so easy in lending your money in London as you have been here, or I am not sure that I am doing you a service by extending your acquaintance. Courtney now and then exceeds his income; and as you are so willing to lend, he might be apt to borrow, that's all." "I shall think of your caution," answered Mordaunt. "But I have purchased experience: I have gone far enough in that way already." And with these words they parted.

When Francis set out for his uncle's house, his agitation was so great as almost to bewilder him. He made no inquiry on his arrival, but mechanically, and with a beating heart, followed Peter

as he led the way to the well-known parlour, which Mr. Vaughan used as his constant sitting-room. When the door was opened, it was some relief to perceive that it was vacant. Though noon, the shutters were closed, and it bore evident marks of not having been occupied that day. A momentary chill struck him. "Is there anything the matter?" he inquired, as the servant still lingered about the room, and busied himself in various trifling occupations. "My master, Sir, has been ill and confined to his room," said he, as he removed the cover from the chair, a symptom that it had been long untenanted. "A fit of the gout with a low fever, the doctor says—but in my mind the fever is more upon the spirits. My master's been an invalid many a year, but I never heard him sigh and groan so much as he has done of late. I am

glad you are here, Sir, for he has often mentioned your name." Francis walked to the window to conceal his uneasiness. " His honour comes down to-day for the first time," continued Peter, and so saying withdrew. The old man had apparently been long indisposed, for the garden, once so remarkable for neatness, was much neglected; even the weeds had made their appearance in sight of the parlour windows. The favourite medals had been disarranged by some careless visitors. All bore marks of the absence of the master's eye. " Can it be anxiety on my account?" said Francis; but these reflections were painful, and without any object but that of dissipating them, he continued his investigation. The mantel-piece was covered with cards of inquiry, and even while he busied himself in perusing the

names, two or three carriages drove up in rapid succession to the door. "This it is to be wealthy. The rich man is sure of the world's sympathy. When *my* father lay dying of a broken heart, and a gleam of brighter prospects might have restored him to life and hope, his last hours were soothed by no voice of inquiry. Yet these were brothers, born beneath the same roof, and I the child of one, am a dependant upon the bounty of the other."

At this moment Mr. Vaughan entered leaning on the arm of a servant. Francis hurried forward to offer his assistance; he thought that his infirmities had alarmingly increased; but the partial light of the room might have deceived him. "I am sorry, Sir," said Francis, "to hear of your indisposition. Till this morning I was ignorant of it."

“ You never inquired, Sir,” said his uncle reproachfully. “ My last letter has remained long unanswered.” “ True, Sir, I have incurred the imputation of seeming neglect; but—but the subject was unpleasant, and I could not bring myself to reply to it.” “ How, Sir,” returned he, “ the subject unpleasant, the thing once nearest to your heart? But you are embarrassed—out with your story at once.” “ The money, the purchase-money which you were kind enough to send me—” he stopped. “ Yes, yes,” returned old Vaughan, naming the sum with a decision of tone that shewed, whatever other infirmities were creeping upon him, that his memory remained perfectly unimpaired, “ has been paid, I hope, before this.” “ Sir, you distress me; it is no longer in my power. It has—” “ What are you going to say? Been squandered—unworthily bestow-

ed. And now, what further can you expect from me?" "Nothing, Sir," said Vaughan, in a tone of humility. "Yet, I could not meet you, at this moment, if my conscience did not acquit me of any intentional wrong. I have been imprudent, but not guilty." "And imprudence was guilt in your situation, young man. Miser as they call me, it is not the loss of the paltry sum which disturbs me. But I must know more. What folly, what madness could urge you to the utter ruin of your own prospects?" "Spare me, Sir," said Francis, "honour forbids me to say more." "Honour," said his uncle contemptuously: "it would have been well had your sense of honour prevented the necessity of concealment." "Thus far I will venture to say in my own justification," returned Francis, "it was no idle folly

of my own—it was to procure no selfish enjoyment. It was for a friend.” “A friend—the boyish acquaintance of a day,” said his uncle, turning away. “It would have been well if in commencing your career, you had engraved the golden maxim on your heart—Be just before you are generous. It must have been a sudden friendship, indeed. To my knowledge you had not even an intimate acquaintance before you went to Oxford, and that is but the affair of a day, with the exception of your cousin Courtney, and he knew your circumstances too well, and is besides too honourable, to have sanctioned this foolery.” Never was Courtney’s secret in such danger as at this moment. The consciousness that a word would turn the scale in his favour, and offer a complete justification of his conduct, strengthened the

temptation—it was a struggle, but generosity was triumphant.

“Have you no further confession to make?” exclaimed the old man. “Nothing, Sir,” said Francis; “I am not without some faint hopes that the money may yet be recovered. There was a time when I considered my friend’s word sacred; but I have yet a purpose in view. To your assistance I own I have forfeited all claims. It is my intention to enter the service as a volunteer. Experience will have taught me caution, and I am not without a proud hope, that my future life will be such as to regain your good opinion.” The old man gazed upon him with a softened countenance: “You have it,” said he, extending his hand, subdued against his will. “I always liked Courtney—I have known him long; but you are—no

matter, you are not hardened ; you are my brother's image. Yet I will not oppose your plan : it is necessary that you should suffer the consequences of your imprudence. But should your conduct be such as I expect, remember that it is still in my power to serve you."

CHAPTER XII.

For I have peeped into thy covered heart,
And seen it blush beneath a boastful brow,
For, by strong guilt's most violent assault
Conscience is but disabled, not destroyed.—*Young.*

To leave England without a personal application to Courtney, appeared to Francis to be taking the business too easily,—to remain in London, after the point was once ascertained, was equally foreign from his purpose. It is the presence of those we love, the habit of social and friendly intercourse, that forms the tie of country, and he felt that with his heart thus seared, he could leave England without much regret. Not to waste time in idle consideration, since deli-

cacy, in such a case, was scarcely to be thought of, on the morning of his arrival, he set forth in search of Philip. He had some distance to go, and as he walked along, his eyes bent on the ground, too full of his own thoughts to pay much attention to outward circumstances, a person, of whose approach he, till that moment, was not aware, suddenly struck against him. Looking up to apologize, he perceived the very object of his thoughts before him, Courtney himself. "Am I so much diminished in figure, my dear fellow," said Courtney, with his usual gaiety, "that you find it impossible to avoid running over me, in your progress?" Vaughan was thrown actually so much off his guard by this unexpected meeting, as to feel at a loss how to reply. Courtney, without noticing his confusion, continued a string

of vague inquiries.—“ Glad to see you, but where did you spring from—when did you arrive?—what inducement was strong enough to allure you back again to this wicked town? In plain language, what is your object here? love, friendship, or business, eh?” Francis was not just then in his happiest humour, and those sallies could not provoke even a smile. “ Love and friendship both,” said Vaughan, pointedly, “ I have learnt to consider as mere names; but, since you will have it one of the three, you are at liberty to conjecture business to be my object, and, to waive all ceremony,—business with you. Are you prepared to answer the question which you doubtless anticipate?” “ Not I,” said Courtney, with a faint laugh; “ I was never prepared to give a reason upon compulsion in my life, nor to listen to a lecture

neither ; so if that is your business, I beg leave to adjourn the question to another meeting.” “ Stay one moment, sir,” said Vaughan, sternly, “ are you then determined to deny my claims upon you ? Answer in a word.—Am I, by the same stroke, to lose both my money and my friend ?” “ Oh, no, not at all,” said Philip, “ you shall never lose your friend, you shall always find me the same.” “ I believe I shall,” said Vaughan, with a look of scorn : “ I must put my plan in execution immediately, I have no other resource ; I shall volunteer into that service, which you have deprived me of the means of entering in a more desirable way ;—but my uncle—” “ My uncle,” said Philip, grasping his arm, “ surely you have not, you could not be so base as to betray me.” “ No,” returned Vaughan, “ I have kept my word

with you—I could wish you had done the same with me; but though I have come off triumphant in the struggle, I will own to you that the temptation was, and still is, strong.” “Come, come this way,” said Philip, his alarm increasing with Vaughan’s warmth, “let us choose a more retired street—this matter must be adjusted before we part; consider where you are, and speak a little lower; your frantic gesture, and loud tone, have drawn eyes upon us. In the first place,” said he, after a moment’s silence, “you forget, I fancy, what I hinted to you some time since, that Catherine Greville had some share in this business—you would not wish her name to be brought forward, I presume.” “I am not quite sure of that,” returned Francis, “since if she were capable of acting thus, the high opinion which I

once entertained of her, is, I must own, shaken. What possible occasion could Miss Greville have for so large a sum?" he added, in a tone of incredulity, which staggered Philip. "Honour, honour, Vaughan, a lady's secret, ask me no further," said he, putting his hand upon his mouth, with an air of mystery; "to do her justice, she knew nothing of my application; neither did she directly apply to me;—accident made me acquainted with the immediate necessity which she had for the money. I was anxious to relieve her, but it was not, at that moment, in my power; I knew that just then, by a fortunate chance it was in yours. A young friend of mine owed me something considerably beyond the amount of my demand, and to this I trusted for a speedy re-payment of the debt. It was disposed of as I have told you; Catherine had

no knowledge, nor now has, of the disagreeable situation in which we are both placed. In the meantime, my friend went all to wreck, and took refuge in France from his creditors, of which number I was one. My money was irrecoverable, and yours, of course, shared its fate. But, however, since you are likely to get nothing more substantial from me at present, I will, at least, trouble you with my advice, and persuade my uncle to keep you a twelvemonth at college. In the meantime, I shall retrench a little more than I have been accustomed to do; and doubt not, in the course of time, to set all straight again. Should the old fellow be restive, you have merely to take your fling, and try the army at once. But, my dear friend," and he shook his hand cordially, "secrecy is the soul of the business; above all, keep the affair out

of the tongues of women. Oh!—we see you at dinner, of course.” Vaughan was engaged. “ Well, at all events, you’ll not be running out of town for a day or two. Clementina is to be my Lady Lovemore next week. You will be one of the bridal party.” Vaughan gave a conditional promise ; his suspicions had been reluctantly excited, and after Courtney had left him, he remained almost fixed to the spot by the strange doubts and anxieties that perplex an honourable mind, on the first surmise of deception in its friend. That Courtney was often embarrassed he knew ; that Catherine was all dignity and feminine feeling, he was determined to believe. Yet how could she have received the money, without sacrificing her delicacy ; but how was he to investigate the fact, without sacrificing his own ?

On his first visit to Harley-street, he found that explanation was out of the question; the house was all in the delightful tumult of bridal preparation. Every female in the establishment was occupied, from morning till night, in the thousand charming troubles of dress, visitors, and correspondence. Mrs. Courtney, so soon to be the mother of a peer, seemed to have suddenly felt the coronet on her brow, and towered in tenfold importance. Catherine was invisible, or found immersed in Brussels lace, French flowers, and gold muslins, which her known taste had obtained her the honour of arranging for the lovely Clementina. The day preceding the nuptials was one of still deeper and more universal occupation. Vaughan, in the hope of some opportunity of speaking to Catherine unobserved, in

the general employment, paid his visit. The drawing-room was empty, and seemed to have been already prepared for the reception of a splendid party. A light step came behind him—it was Julia's. "So, Cousin," said she, laughing, "you are determined on doing the honours to the last; well, then, as I am not likely to have you for an adorer, and as I hate to submit to the imputation, without a chance of the reality, we must not be seen *tête-à-tête*, charming as it is, so follow the Fairy Goodwill, on pain of—what,—ay, of not getting a smile from Catherine!" She held out her hand; and Vaughan followed her to what might be called the council-room of the family.

Into this room he had never been admitted before, and it had a formal and official look. Packets of letters, arranged

with the exactitude of office, seemed to be the principal furniture of its walls, and Mrs. Courtney's writing-desk held a distinguished and portentous place in the apartment. From this spot had issued all the despatches of this formidable lady, in all her intricate transactions;—in this room were received those persons whom no one acknowledges, but to whose agency so many among the *beau monde* are indebted for an appearance in the fashionable world. Here, too, were held the debates on those delicate affairs, which sometimes embarrass polite mammas encumbered with accomplished daughters.

At present, the transmission of the little enclosures of bride-cake seemed the great business of the day; and Vaughan was ordered to take up the pen, and act as secretary, under the

orders of Martha. The fair object of the ceremonial sat leaning, like Juliet,

“ Her hand upon her cheek,”

in some meditation, in which, at least, joy seemed to have no share. “To whom shall I address this heavy envelope?” said Vaughan, taking up a packet larger than the rest. “To Miss Matilda Matchem, Sir,” said Martha, “the odious Matchem; and every grain of it will be a punishment to her, if it were ten times the size.” He took up another. “Let that,” said the tender Seraphina, “go to my bosom friend, Felicia Fondle, a due reward for her hypocritical affection, her malicious spirit, and her bitter tongue.”

Clementina now raised her head, and dashing a tear from her eye, “Mr. Vaughan, before they are all gone, let me secure one for—;” she stopped, and grew

pale ; in the next moment, the colour returned, and flushed even her forehead. “ For whom ? ” said Vaughan, holding the pen suspended. “ For a villain, Sir,” said the lady, rising from her seat, and pacing the room, “ for a heartless, worthless, callous villain ! But I will punish him ; if he has a soul to feel, he shall feel ; if he can be wrung by disappointment, by shame, by scorn, I shall be avenged, ay, though I died for it.” She sat down, for a moment, exhausted by passion. Catherine who had, till now, scarcely raised her eyes from the pile of finery which her delicate fingers were wreathing into shape, now sprang from her chair, and tried to soothe the enraged beauty. Even Martha, who began to think the scene not altogether fit for a stranger’s eye, had left her occupation of cutting the bride-cake into

sections, correspondent to her loves and hates, and joined in the attempt. The tender Seraphina sat still, and applying her volatile salts to her nose with more assiduity, only sighed over the weakness of the one sex, and the wickedness of the other. "Come, Vaughan," said Martha, turning to him, as she looked, in astonishment, at the group, "you have seen our tragedy rather unexpectedly, have you nothing reviving to tell us? Is there no news in the living world? No one come to town, that *would* not stay in the country; no one gone to the country that *could* not stay in town?" "No one dead?" sighed Seraphina. Vaughan tasked his memory in vain. "No one of all the multitude of our acquaintance married?" said Catherine, attempting to direct the inquiries to some less perilous topic. "Yes," returned Vaughan,

submissive to her voice, "I was just told of the marriage of a Sir Mark Thornton, to a city fortune of the largest dimensions." He was made aware of this formidable inadvertence, by a general stare of the family circle, followed by a sigh and a scream from the gentle Seraphina, who rushed over to a sofa, and flung herself on it, in a hysteric. Mrs. Courtney, at one and the same moment, entered the room, heard the news, and overwhelmed the luckless narrator. "Monster! barbarian! what have you not to answer for?" Vaughan, insecure what portion of the philippic was meant for the faithless lover, or whether it was all devoted to himself, attempted to make an apology, and attempted to make a retreat, equally in vain. The lady intercepted both, and fixing her eyes on his, with a withering look,

“ Mr. Vaughan,” said she, “ I am altogether unacquainted with your motives for interfering with the concerns of my family, for intruding on their interests, for injuring their prospects, for depriving them of their rights ; but a stop shall be put to this.” The current of her passion had carried her words thus far ; but Vaughan’s spirit had been now roused, and the indignation gathering in his countenance warned her of betraying her secret. She turned to the sofa, where Seraphina lay in the tenderest posture of affliction ; “ Look there, Sir,” she continued, “ a beloved child made miserable by the duplicity, the baseness, the want of feeling in your sex, Sir. She is dying of wounded sensibility. That wretch Sir Mark Thornton ; he shall suffer for this. An action for breach of promise, shall teach

him the penalty of paying attentions to his superiors, and then leaving them to this cruel neglect." "Neglect, Mamma," said Seraphina, starting from the sofa, with recovered nerves, and voice in all its vigour; "I beg leave to say, that I feel nothing on the subject; I despise the person in question too much to feel anything but utter contempt; and more than that, I always despised him. I knew him to be as base in spirit as he was clownish in exterior; with the head of a spendthrift, and the heart of a swindler. And now, ladies, and Mr. Vaughan, that you have heard my confession of faith, I hope I may have liberty to leave you to your meditations." She took her mother's arm, who looked all astonishment, and whom, with an exertion altogether unexpected in this child of all the delicacies, she absolutely urged out of

of the room. Vaughan, who had only added surprise to his wrath, was now about to retire, when Martha stopped him. "No, no, cousin, we want you still: those little packets are not yet addressed. In my writing, they would not have half the poignancy that they will carry direct to the heart from a stranger's hand. It will be evident that a stranger has been admitted into the Cabinet! for this," and she pointed round the room, "is the notorious diplomatic spot, the chamber to which the bluest in Blue Beard's castle was colourless; here we have been charged, one and all of us, with decapitating more reputations, and cutting the rosy chains of more courtships, or the iron ones of more marriages, than my humble memory can reckon."

Catherine raised her eyes with a de-

precatory look at Martha. Vaughan listened and laughed. But Julia, who had sat gazing on her sister, the reluctant bride, with a varying countenance that showed some unusual and deep anxiety of her own, turned, and with a feeble smile that yet lighted up her fine eyes in sudden sunshine ; “ Yes, Martha tells nothing but the truth. We are in the full possession of the hate, or envy, or scorn of the million of misses who marry or are given in marriage. We are currently compared to Macbeth’s Witches, though, instead of amusing ourselves with overturning churches, sweeping away harvests, or drowning merchants and mariners, our deeper devastation is said to consist in sowing what is reaped in the prolific form of family quarrels, in repelling enamoured

people from churches, and in giving fools who *will* marry very excellent hints for drowning themselves."

Catherine, in the hope of stopping this strange confidence, rose to leave the room. Vaughan was soon at her side, and reluctant to bear the imputation of a private interview, she turned to the window. Their thoughts were on other things, but their conversation was on the bride ; and Vaughan heard, for the first time, that Miss Courtney was about to make an alliance which she hated, to punish a fluctuating lover, to whom she had given all the heart that she had to give. This lover was a Colonel Windham, a man of intelligence and feeling, who had been attracted by her animated manners, and fashionable beauty ; but had been subsequently alarmed by her

extravagance, and was now probably alienated altogether by her coquetry.

A splendid equipage now drew up to the door; the hall echoed with the thunders of the showy footmen who sprang from behind it. "It is Lord Lovemore's carriage," said Vaughan. Miss Courtney actually bounded from her seat. "Not at home; for heaven's sake, say I am not to be seen."—"What excuse shall be made?" interrupted Martha. "All, any thing, say I am gone out, busy, sick,—or dead." Her voice grew hollow as she pronounced the word. She was pale as marble, and stood tottering in the centre of the room. Vaughan flew to her. "Go," said she, not attending to him. "Martha, say that—yet—what can be said—but that I *must* marry him—to-morrow if he will; but I must be spared to-day.

Let me have this day at least to myself—let to-morrow bring misery—ay, and revenge.” The females gathered round her. Vaughan offered his consolation, and suggested that it was not too late to break off the alliance; that she ought not to throw away her happiness; and that he was ready to communicate her wishes to Lord Lovemore. She seemed to recover her recollection at the name, and turning full upon her astonished adviser, pronounced, in a stern and contemptuous tone, her surprise that he should suppose her capable of violating her engagements; that his interposition was as unnecessary as it was uncalled for; and that she would be Lady Lovemore, live or die. Vaughan shrank from the rencontre; and the lady calling to her sisters to follow, walked proudly out of the room.

Vaughan would have pursued the steps of the indignant beauty, and wooed and won forgiveness, but for a reason irresistible. One of the groupe had remained, and remained so deeply busied in fixing an ostrich plume in a turban, that she seemed to have no thoughts for earth beside. The imperious summons to the sisters had not stirred her from the interesting study to which she had thus given up eye and ear; even the closing of the door, which echoed through the building, had not withdrawn a glance from the spangled object of her meditation. This profound absorption was unbroken, until Vaughan stood behind her chair, and pronounced her name. She started at the sound, and had almost suffered the future ornament of the lovely and irascible bride to have

touched the floor. On perceiving the solitude, she apologized, and rose to leave the apartment; yet she was detained, by a gentle hand and a gentle history. How she listened, or how she looked, is not for us to reveal, while an eloquent tongue, animated by young hope, and vivid with young passion, unfolded its imaginations. But when that tongue at length came to tell the result of all the lover's prospects, the necessity for separation, and the resolve to try the chances of fortune in the most precarious of all its forms, Catherine hastily drew a chair and sat down: still he spoke, and she listened without a reply; but he felt the hand, which had lain in his, tremble, and grow chill; and on the one which hung upon her lap, a diamond tear fell and glittered. Anxious to avoid increasing a distress,

which yet, by the strange inconsistency of love, gave him deep delight, he hastened to a conclusion; simply adding, that “ he would now look upon himself as having established a claim to be called on whenever she might a second time have a wish unfulfilled.” She raised her eyes at the words, and repeated, “ A second time !” with an emphasis, which brought on an explanation.

Courtney’s finesse filled her with astonishment and vexation. She glowed with disdain, and adjured Vaughan to believe her altogether incapable of the grossness of borrowing his money, or of applying for it through another, and, of all men, through one, whose artifice, meanness, and hollowness she thoroughly knew and scorned. In the strong and lively vindication of her feelings, she would have almost knelt, to protest before

Heaven her innocence of this debasing and unfeminine application. Vaughan caught her to his heart, and with a delicious and dream-like joy gazed on her beauty, her noble brow knitting and quivering over her bright and impassioned eye, her cheek suffused with the crimson of offended delicacy, and her lip breathing sounds that to him were sweet beyond all melody. If he had never loved her before, he would have been now her slave. In silence, and the whole solemn and burning homage of the heart, he devoted himself to her. Their eyes were by one movement and unconsciously turned upon the sky, as if to register their mutual vow, and from that moment they were bound to each other for ever.

CHAPTER XIII.

Poor wretch!

That for thy mother's fault, art thus exposed

To loss, and what may follow. Farewell!

The day frowns more and more; thou'rt like to have
A lullaby too rough.—*Shakspeare*.

THE bridal morn rose full of “the pomp, pride, and circumstance” of glorious wedlock. The street was crowded at an early hour with the equipages of his Lordship's relations, and of every person of fashion whom the lady of the mansion could conjure to this triumph of her dynasty. Lord Lovemore's lingered latest, but it was only to overwhelm all the others by its splendours. His Lordship's coach, chariot, and travelling carriage made their appearance in slow succession, drawn by prancing bloods,

and surrounded by outriders, in liveries absolutely covered with lace. The multitude in the street were all admiration; the scarcely less numerous multitude that filled the windows, as far as the train were visible, probably mingled their admiration with envy; even in the drawing-room itself, echoing as it was with compliment and congratulation, there might have been other feelings than those of pleasure. But in Mrs. Courtney's bosom all were swallowed up in one—pride. Clementina had not yet made her appearance. But her mother was equal, if not to charm all hearts, at least to fill all eyes. The first grand object of her life, her dream by night, and her meditation by day, the last web of her long labour of stratagem and subserviency, of reluctant endurance, and pining vanity, was on the point of being complete. “Hope elevated, and Joy brightened, her

crest." She had been handsome in her youth ; she had preserved her features less with the childish pleasure of a belle, than with the diligent care of a professor. Time had left his inevitable traces ; and restless anxiety, and stern passion, had not helped to smooth them. But she was still showy ; and on that morning her countenance, robed in smiles and rouge, and her stately figure decorated with all the grace and costliness of fashion, seemed to demand the homage of earlier days.

As Lord Lovemore, bowing with the humility of a courtier, led her forward, there was a sudden buzz of applause. To half the circle she was totally unknown ; and his Lordship was about to be congratulated on his bride ; when Mrs. Courtney, quick as lightning, perceived this formidable misconception,

and as instantly put a stop to it, by announcing her daughter Clementina. The folding-doors were thrown open, and the bride entered, attended by her sisters and Miss Greville as bridesmaids. There was a strange contrast in her movement to the haughty and exulting advance of her mother. She leaned on Catherine's arm, and walked slowly, and as if in mental pain. She was veiled; and the whole train, with their white dresses, soundless footsteps, and melancholy air, suggested to Vaughan the procession of a nun going to the cloister. The anxious mother instantly caught Clementina's hand, drew her aside, and in a brief but bitter whisper, upbraided her with this perverse reluctance to be happy; and demanded whether she was prepared to sacrifice, for a whim, for a childish dis-

like, the whole hopes of the family, her own elevation, her own pride, and, more than all, the power of inflicting punishment on Windham. Clementina answered not a word; and Mrs. Courtney looking upon the conquest as gained, and turning to the company with one of her most subduing smiles, laid the passive hand in Lord Lovemore's. His Lordship started back; he already held another passive hand, and had already poured his happiest eloquence into another passive ear. The figure beside him was perfectly bridal. The circle were in surprise; his Lordship, in some phrases of superannuated gallantry, begged that he might have the honour of developing the fair incognita. She resisted; and with a scarcely suppressed laugh held down the veil, which, with her deep bonnet aiding her atti-

tude, had completely concealed her face. The laugh was spreading through the room, when Mrs. Courtney, to whom that morning was obviously destined for the full display of all her faculties of government, pressed forward, and pronouncing the words, "Intolerable! Julia, for what is this levity?" suddenly drew off the veil, and showed the smiling features of the handsomest of her daughters. Julia's apology for a dress so closely resembling her sister's was soon made, she "wore it to express her respect for his Lordship! Her taking his best speeches to herself, arose from the unexpected delight of being made love to in so charming a strain, and for the first time too in her life. In short, she could not bring herself to doubt his Lordship's sagacity so far, as to suppose him capable of being de-

ceived, and she had even begun to think that he was sincere." His Lordship professed himself delighted with her dexterity, expressed his susceptibility to the charms of wit and beauty in every shape, and threw himself on the mercy of the bride. Mrs. Courtney's temper had been urged to the utmost, but with an effort little short of a pang, she kept it down, and simply begged, with a treasure of after-vengeance in her eye, that this playfulness might not retard the important *business* of the day. It was announced that the carriages were ready. His Lordship now took the hand of the bride, and with the same smile which he had worn at the birth-days of half a century, implored, probably to prevent further mischances, that the envious veil might be raised that hung between him and so

much beauty. He raised the veil ; and Clementina's fixed eye overwhelmed even his urbanity for the time. He almost started back as he saw its cold and sullen glare, the lifeless hue of her countenance rouged as it was, and the livid paleness of her lip. But it was too late ; the veil was again dropped ; and her mother followed her to the carriage, where, flinging herself back the seat, she remained silent and motionless, till the long and pompous cavalcade had arrived at the church-door.

Marriage is not a joyous ceremony. The solemnity of the ritual—the sacredness of the altar—the gravity of its minister—the newness of the life into which it leads—the separation, partial as it may be, from early ties and fondnesses, are all adverse to joy. The Hymen of

the ancient world, with his flutes and dancers, his cheerful torch, and laughing countenance, has given way to a loftier but a more subdued spirit ; and the noblest rite of friendship and love is often consecrated by tears.

This marriage was the stern service of revenge. An angry and a tempestuous heart was hid in the holy words that passed over the bride's lip. Her mother doubly anxious, as the last moment of possible hesitation approached, watched every moment ; and whispering in her ear to be firm, stood in an almost involuntary attitude to receive her if she should fall. Catherine, scarcely less anxious from pity, was at her side, alternately listening to the ceremonial and sustaining the bride. Vaughan and Courtney, in the remoter circle, equally gazed, and were equally

spell-bound by the contrast. Catherine, with her noble countenance, filled at once with high devotion and human tenderness, her full and splendid glance cast upwards in the more sacred portions of the rite, and her lip, touched with sweet seriousness and cheering smiles, as she turned towards the victim, gave Vaughan the idea of Beauty and Compassion personified beside Despair. Courtney saw, with sudden scorn of himself, only the loveliness which he had lost; and formed his dark determination to thwart and crush the rival who had mastered his interest in her heart.

The ceremony approached its conclusion—sighs and tears were among the circle—but the bride neither sighed nor wept. She pronounced the solemn words that gave her to another, without

a change of feature ; but, at the moment when she was turning from the altar, a fiery flush crossed her countenance, she pressed Catherine's wrist, and murmured, " All's over ; Windham and I are parted for ever ; I am revenged."

All was now congratulation ; the tears were wiped away, and a long succession of festivities was announced for the return of his Lordship and the bride, who set off from the church-door for their country-seat, followed by the gaze and the plaudits of the multitude.

The remainder of the marriage-party returned to Harley-street to a *déjeuné* ; Mrs. Courtney, now secure, now the mother of a peeress, and now entitled to enrol herself in the list of fashion, to which she had hitherto put forward so restless, yet so indecisive a claim, already wore the air of rank, and presided

at the table with a haughty dignity of a totally distinct character from the expression which smoothed her powerful physiognomy an hour before. She left the care of her guests to her son, who, adroit and animated in his office, brought frequent laughter to the lips of half a dozen young belles clustered towards the foot of the table, sometimes disturbed the deep conversation which was going on between Vaughan and Catherine, disconcerted even Martha's acidity; and, what was more to the purpose, completely covered a long lesson which Mrs. Courtney was pouring into the ear of a young and opulent Baronet, on the advantage of early matrimony.

The Baronet had danced with Julia at a rout a few evenings before, and had been so energetic in his admiration, that there was no alternative but of Mr.

Courtney's calling him out, or Mrs. Courtney's taking him in. The stately matron chose the latter, and when she had developed her opinions at sufficient length, she looked round for the bewitching Julia to take the chair in her absence for a moment—a moment which was to be fraught with the Baronet's captivity for life.

But his time was not yet come. Julia was not at the table. On further inquiry, she was not in her chamber; she was not even in the house. A sudden suspicion, formidable to all her prospects, flashed through her mother's mind. There was confusion at the table; there was no less confusion in the servants' hall. The matter grew more serious still. A sort of temporary tribunal was formed of the guests, the mother, and son, and

daughters; and the whole domestic tribe busied in the ceremony were put in a state of inquisition. The only fact ascertainable by the Court was, that Miss Julia had not returned to the house. A reluctant chambermaid was, at length, brought forwards, who acknowledged that she had packed up Miss Julia's ornaments and a travelling dress the night before, and that she believed she was gone away, "she supposed, like Lady Lovemore, to be married and happy with the man of her liking."

Conjecture was now turned to this "man of her liking." It struck at once upon Mrs. Courtney; and she pronounced, in a voice of wrath and disappointment, the name of "Gordon." The name echoed and re-echoed round the table. "Gordon, what Gordon? of the

Duke's family? of the General's? of the Ambassador's?" — "No," said Courtney, bitterly; "a simple fortune-hunter and lieutenant; with his commission in place of rental and pedigree."—"A beggar," sneered Martha, "and I don't perceive that he is likely to improve his circumstances."—"A reprobate, an absolute swindler; nay, a younger son;" said Mrs. Courtney, pacing the room in undisguised distraction.—"A scoundrel, and I'll shoot him for this day's work!" exclaimed the Baronet.

Vaughan had been hitherto restrained by Catherine's imploring eyes. But his temper had its limits; and his knowledge of Gordon inflamed him against the taunter. He touched him, and repeated his word—"Scoundrel." Then turning to the crowd, who had already made way round him, said impetuously,

“I demand an instant apology for that word, in the name of Mr. Gordon.” The crowd stared—the Baronet drew back;—“I here publicly declare,” said Vaughan, “that no one is entitled to fix a stigma upon the character of that gentleman, whom I know to be a man of honour, of integrity, and of feeling. What he may have done in the present matter is not to be decided on until the circumstances are known; whether he may have been compelled to it by ungenerous treatment, or led by the passion that the noblest minds have often found irresistible. But I could pledge my own honour for his; and in my presence, at least, no man shall do him injustice with impunity.”

The circle stared in utter astonishment, but the effect of this warlike denunciation was admirably pacific. Courtney,

who had risen from his seat, evidently full of indignant eloquence, suddenly sat down again without a word. The ladies of the family restricted themselves to glances of the severest displeasure compatible with ladies' eyes. Vaughan looked round for one in whose eyes such glances would have given him pain; but she was gone. He had now finished all his offences; and he prepared to take his leave, with a determination never to stand beneath the roof of that acrid and worldly household again. At the door of the apartment he slipped his card into the Baronet's hand, and sternly and slowly marching down the stairs, had leisure to hear the burst of galling laughter, that pursued him on the closing of the door.

He had reached the hall, which the footmen, occupied in the family debate,

had left deserted, when his meditation was broken by a whisper ;

“ How silver sweet are lover’s tongues by night,”

says Shakspeare ; and he might have added, by morn, or noon, or dewy eve. Lutes and lyres, pedal harps and grand pianos, are notoriously dulness and discord to it. He turned ; and saw Catherine’s glistening eye ; and led by her beckoning hand and fairy foot, he followed to a small apartment off the hall.

What they said to each other there ; how Catherine, applauding him for his defence of Gordon, adjured him to let the slanderer rest under the mortification which he had already received ; how she deplored Vaughan’s departure, and vowed, ay, with a beating heart, and many a tear, more pre-

cious than the pearls round her neck, to follow him in thought through all the changes and chances of his adventure; and how he bound himself by his hope of seeing those bright eyes, and pressing that lily hand, and hearing those sweet lips again, to be true; to have her image first, last, and midst, in all his thoughts; to keep his heart sealed up against all else; and to feel every hour an age, until he should once more set his foot upon British ground, and live in the sunshine of her smiles! Why should I tell such things, when every soul that reads these pages will have imagined them a thousand times better than I could tell them, nay, has felt them. For who, among mortal men or women, has not been once in the paradise of our world of dreams?

There was a little ornament of sap-

phires hung by a chain from Catherine's neck, which she took two or three times between her delicate fingers in the course of this conversation, and looked at it as if she could have wished it conveyed away by magic; yet there it remained, perplexing her touch, and perpetually fixing her almost unconscious eyes.

The voices had both sunk into whispers, and from whispers into silence, unless a sigh now and then was communion. The minds of both were busied with thoughts which words are not made to utter; their looks were cast upon the ground, and they might have been taken for two statues of tender and noble beauty; but for the movement of the lover's hand, which gently unbound the sapphire locket from his lady's bended neck, and fastened to its chain a miniature of himself.

This was done slowly and timidly; but it was done without resistance, only a deeper crimson glowed on Catherine's cheek, and when the miniature was securely fastened by its golden links, it was suddenly hidden, and pressed within the folds of her robe; beyond these signs nothing told that she was acquainted with the little transfer.

Her lover stood silently gazing on her, as she less placed than enshrined his picture in her bosom; then bowed his lips to her hand, bade God bless her, and rushed from the mansion. Catherine, with an effort, walked to the door of the apartment, and closed it, then tottered back to the sofa, and, half fainting, covered the picture with kisses and tears of delight and anguish indescribable.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ In the midst of our societies, divided by so many prejudices, the soul is in a state of continual agitation. She ceaselessly revolves within herself a thousand turbulent and contradictory opinions, by which the members of our ambitious and crafty circle are habitually endeavouring to subjugate each other.”

St. Pierre.

OTHER, but scarcely less exciting, feelings were very busy in the drawing-room. The sudden scorn which had been awakened by Vaughan's unfashionable defence of the absent, had burst out on his departure with a general animation, vivid beyond all the rules of well-bred apathy, and excusable only in the case of ridiculing a display of honour and manliness in an individual equally new and obscure.

But even the delights of ridicule have their close, and the next subject for the general eye was the mistress of the feast. There are some people as much made to sit at the head of tables, as others to wait at them; and if chance sometimes puts in the chair the personage whom nature would have placed behind it, there was no such mistake in Mrs. Courtney's location. If she had during the morn,

“Moved, as the jewelled crown were on her brow,”

she lost no portion of her royalty on the throne of the déjeuné.

But in all her attractions, there was a wandering from the business of the moment, that gradually became palpable to an alarming degree. She took champagne with Jack Flatter, the moment after she had excused herself to a peer

of the realm; she helped a cornet of the lancers at the moment when a general officer had fixed his eyes on that pheasant's wing which was destined to elude his plate for ever; a Knight of the Garter, drank the health of the happy pair, at the unfortunate crisis when a Knight of the Bath was in the act of proposing the same civility. Mrs. Courtney bowed and smiled, but her return was made to the K.C.B. Fate was against her to-day, and a noble ministerial duke, involved in high flirtation with the lady of a patriotic member of the House of Commons, was absolutely forced to interrupt the most ardent and continued of all his whispers, by a disconcerting glance sent direct from the unconscious Mrs. Courtney!

It was obvious that something singular was working in a spirit hitherto so accu-

rate in its distinctions. The duke and the lady suddenly rose, and their rising was followed by the departure of the offended individuals; still the mistress of the mansion was involved in a deep conference with the baronet, who seemed bound by an uneasy spell. The topic was evidently the elopement of her daughter, and the purpose was to persuade Sir Thomas to set out in pursuit. To this, however, his objections, if not eloquent were strong; for no argument applied to his passions could find its way to his understanding.

In woman as in man, if it be not profaneness to compare the sex with their natural slaves, the idol with the worshipper, it will probably be discovered, that opposition as often invigorates as defeats a favourite purpose. As the baronet's aversion to waste his time and

his money in chase of the culprits grew more decided, Mrs. Courtney's determination to pursue and punish acquired strength.

But she found the necessity of changing her tactique. She communicated to her guests, now reduced in number, the resolution to set out herself in pursuit, and her refusal of all companionship. The latter part of her resolve was no sooner expressed, than it produced an absolute tumult of entreaty to be permitted to attend her. "The hazard of so long a pursuit,—the necessity for a friend of the family to be on the spot,—the importance of compelling the plunderer to give up his lovely victim by the most summary mode," were all urged with a rivalry, which showed, at least, that generous friendship had not yet taken its flight to the stars.

The difficulty now was, how to get rid of the numerous offers of carriages and attendants and the gallant masters of both. But the lady was firm, remoter interests submitted, and the strugglers were at length reduced to Philip Courtney and Sir Thomas Foxhall.

The former insisted upon the service as his duty, the latter as his right. Still the lady repelled both, and ordered post-horses with the steadiness of a Roman matron. At length she gave way ; for women are loveliest when they bend ; and, turning to the baronet, pronounced the words, “ Sir Thomas, I will not disappoint you.”

Her hearer absolutely started back in astonishment : he attempted to utter his thanks for the honour, but the “ Amen stuck in his throat.”—“ Your zeal, your friendship, your honourable delicacy, all have compelled me to yield. I had at

first been inclined to leave my daughter's disobedience to be its own punishment; but a mother *will* have feelings"—here she paused, and applied her handkerchief to her eyes—"and rash as my unfortunate Julia is, she must not be lost to society without an effort to save her."

The circle were loud in their approbation, Sir Thomas alone was silent. The moment was critical, and it was not overlooked. "Sir Thomas," said the lady, offering him her hand with her most confiding air, "I have not less feeling for you than for myself on this occasion. Your generous attachment, your honourable sentiments, your rank in life, deserve the amplest return; and my daughter can only require a moment of her calmer reason to do them justice."

A servant now entered, to say that the Baronet's equipage was ready. "It

strikes me, madam," said the lover, to whom the probable rencontre with Gordon seemed less and less desirable; "the thought has just occurred to me, that a pair of Bow-street officers would have a better chance of overtaking these people; or that Mr. Courtney—in short, my presence at the instant of discovery might hinder the reconciliation, or 'pon my soul, make me unpopular with the lady, the very last thing I should wish to be."

But Mrs. Courtney, who looked to the moment of recapture for making a scene, in which the baronet was to be roused into an express declaration, could not suffer him to abandon his privilege of escort; and throwing over her well-turned shoulders a shawl, and speaking a few words of condolence to her sympathizing friends and disconsolate family, she took the arm of the reluct-

ant Sir Thomas, and sprang into the barouchet, which set off full gallop for the north road.

There were days when the sight of a postchaise and four, rushing with winged speed along any road in the kingdom, would have raised a tumult of curiosity in the whole host of innkeepers, with their ministrant grooms and chambermaids. But the days of wonder are past, and nothing but a balloon can put speculation in the eyes of those licensed raisers of contribution on the king's highway.

The intelligence obtained by the pursuers was of the most careless and yet of the most perplexing order. It would seem as if each inn was the centre of communication to the empire, and that roads with flying equipages upon them radiated from it to all the corners of the earth; the generation of ladies in "white

dressess," and gentlemen with "dark-brown eyes, bronzed complexions, and military look," seemed to have suddenly multiplied in a most extraordinary degree; for from each inn, one or more of such pairs were declared by the proper authorities, "to have started in the course of that very morn."

The perplexity, however, had obviously a different effect upon the present travellers. Mrs. Courtney grew more distrait, and was even rapidly sinking into that neglect of appearances implied in losing her temper. On the contrary, the Baronet's good humour palpably grew with the confusion; and when, at St. Alban's, all trace was apparently lost, his gallantry and exhilaration were raised to the highest pitch; he ordered refreshments and a relay of horses for London, with the tone of a

conqueror; and in the intervals of his champagne, and Mrs. Courtney's declamation on undutiful daughters, menaced Gordon with the most unpardoning retribution.

The horses were put to, and the Baronet was handing his irritated fellow traveller down the steps of the inn, when one of the ostlers intimated that he had a piece of intelligence to communicate. There never was a more luckless service; the conclusion, that it must relate to the fugitives, flashed at once across his mind, and that of the lady; and, at the same instant, that, with an oath, he desired the fellow to go about his business, Mrs. Courtney flew upon him, and by the magic of a guinea, extracted his whole knowledge.

It was at best but of dubious transmission, and had to be followed through a

cross road, that severely tried the spirit of the horses, and the temper of the Baronet. At length, in a broken country, terminated by a heath, and dotted by clumps, and thickets of rude wood, a postchaise and four was seen. Mrs. Courtney uttered a cry of mingled wrath and exultation. The Baronet was silent as the grave. "There they are," said the lady; "their horses are evidently unable to drag them any further. Now they have disappeared." She flung down the windows, and called to the postillions to put the horses to their speed. Clumps and thickets flew behind; and at length down a gloomy lane, covered by the remnant of an ancient grove, was seen the fugitive equipage, drawn up at the door of a cottage. Mrs. Courtney sprang from the carriage, calling on the Baronet to follow,

and rushed into the house. But the whole expedition had been against his good-will, and he judged it wiser to regulate his movements by circumstances, and leave family disputes to those most interested in their arrangement.

The affair was decided without him : he had scarcely arranged his cravat, and freed his dress from the dust of its travel, before he was startled from all gentler occupation by a loud scream from the house, and the sight of a man rushing away through the copse behind.

It was unquestionable, that to pursue this fugitive would be as useless, as it would now be ungallant to leave the ladies to themselves. He bounded from the carriage, and glanced into the room. There a new wonder awaited him ; for there sat Mrs. Courtney with a countenance between wonder and vexation ;

and opposite to her sat, in all the pathos of offended dignity, the fair, the proud, and the severe Lady Diana Prudely, who, with her Lord, had that morning honoured the bridal party in Harley-street, and had eloped from his Lordship and the festivity with the gallant Colonel Champetre of the Lancers.

Her ladyship sat, like Niobe, all tears, infinitely unhappy at—being discovered; and politely outrageous at the mal-à-propos intrusion of her dearest and most hated friend. Mrs. Courtney felt that she had plunged into an *embarras*, and exerted all her ingenuity to extricate herself; but she was too far in already.

Lady Diana ranged the whole scale of sobs and upbraidings, of excuses and recriminations, detailed the total history of her Lord's neglect, and of her own

unmitigated contempt for the world's opinion, and absolutely forced the impatient confidante to sit out the storm.

But a tumult outside at length checked the visitation. The voices of Colonel Champetre and the Baronet were heard in high exchange. The Colonel had returned on seeing that his pursuer was his old turf acquaintance, of whose chivalry he had already known the extent, and of whose intrusion in the present affair, he, of course, spoke in very warlike terms. It was in vain that the Baronet protested his most profound ignorance of the matter in question, his particular regard for the Colonel, and the inviolable feeling which would prevent him, as a man of honour, from interfering with any other man of honour, in carrying off his neighbour's wife.

As the Baronet grew more pacific, the

Colonel grew more sanguinary, called for his pistols, and vowed the offender's extermination, in a voice "deeper and deeper still," as the reluctant antagonist alternately retreated and made battle, argued, and approached the door. The tale of anguish and agonies within, now gave way to the recriminations without; when the door was suddenly flung open, and Mrs. Courtney, wearied with the scene, and too haughty to countenance hypocrisy, without a profitable end, desired the Colonel to put a stop to the dispute, and the Baronet to attend her to the carriage.

Woman is a formidable animal, whether as a war-maker or a peace-maker, and the dispute instantly fell to the ground before the stern glance and sarcastic smile of the lady. The Colonel's gallantry, "of course, could not resist a

a lady's command; for there was an easy scorn gathering on Mrs Courtney's lip, which betrayed so keen a knowledge of certain portions of his military career, that he felt resistance might be the means of refreshing his memory on matters, which he was extremely disposed to confine to as small a circle as possible. He saw the rod, and kissed it with due humility. On the other hand, the Baronet was glad to get out of the scrape on any simple terms, and thanked his protecting genius from the bottom of whatever soul he had.

Lady Diana, too deeply busied with her own interesting situation to think of the world but as well lost for love, had flung herself on the sofa in the most touching attitude that could occur to her on so short a preparation, and lay "à la Cleopatre mourante;" ehr full white arm

bent over the scroll of the couch; her handsome cheek reposing on her full white arm; a rich ringlet, black as the raven's wing, falling over her finely-rounded and half-exposed bosom; and a scarlet gold embroidered shawl, of measureless breadth, folded and wreathed round her Sultana figure, in all the lines of beauty.

Her Ladyship was heart-broken, dying, dead! The Colonel flew over to her, flung himself on his knee beside the sofa, adjured her to live for him, swore constancy imperishable, and was rewarded, nay, more than rewarded, by a reviving smile.

A few explanatory words cleared up the general error. The customary confusion at a fashionable bridal had suggested itself to the parties, as offering a happy cover for flight. To the Colonel's

boundless astonishment the same circumstance seemed to have prompted the same conclusion in others ; and he had seen, but the moment before his transfer of Lady Diana from the equipage of her abjured lord to that of her adoring lover, a youthful pair, one of whom he knew to be Gordon, executing an exactly similar manœuvre.

Another moment, however, had separated the fugitive equipages ; the Colonel's flying to the North, the subaltern's flying to the South. All pursuit must now be hopeless : they were, by this time, far as the poles asunder ; and the wisest thing for his most valued and admired friend, Mrs. Courtney, to do, was to return to London, and leave those absurd young persons, who had made up their minds to abandon the advantages of her countenance and pro-

tection, to enjoy the benefit of their folly.

Mrs. Courtney wavered ; vexation at being baffled, contempt for the speaker's opinion, and resentment against the run-aways, held her in suspense ; she walked impetuously backwards and forwards in the fragment of a flower-bed that decorated the front of the cottage, while the group kept clear of her, in somewhat of that awe with which we look upon a royal tiger ranging his cage.

But the day had already made visible progress, and further meditation must have led her journey into the night, or left her to obtrude for a lodging on the rather dubious good-will of the Colonel and his fair protégée.

In this period of suspense, the Baronet assumed a courage worthy of the crisis, and ventured to propose her return. But

a chill blast whistling through the scrubbed hawthorns and meagre shrubbery round the Ferme Ornée, and a sudden gathering of the clouds that gave signal of a rude night, had more effect than his eloquence; and Mrs. Courtney, without a reply, stepped into the carriage, waved her hand to the cottage pair, fiercely pronounced the word "home" to the postillions; and flinging herself back on the seat, with her handkerchief thrown over a face burning with indignation, was, with her silent companion, conveyed at full speed over common, through village, and by brake and bushy dell, towards London.

The prognostics of the lowering skies, the only promises never broken in England, became rapidly fulfilled. Wild bursts of rain drenched the laced liveries; whirls of wind filling the vista with

falling leaves, flung the light carriage from side to side; thunder began to growl, and now and then a livid flash shot across the twilight, and shewed some drenched peasant hiding under a tree, or some startled traveller, bent to his horse's neck, and muffled to the eyes, rushing by.

The night fell at once; the carriage still swept along, to the growing alarm of the Baronet; but the lady, who had yet uttered no syllable, seemed determined to keep her resolution of silence. The flash of a gaslight at length showed that they had reached the environs of London, and at the same moment showed a man mounting his horse at the door of the inn, over which a lamp displayed the stately sign of the Green Dragon.

The lady and her companion exclaimed together "Gordon!" The postillions

were ordered to draw up; but the horseman had already gone at full gallop into the darkness, and the innkeeper could tell no more of him, than that he seemed in remarkable haste, and by no means in the most easy temper; that his horse was a first-rate roadster; that he had made out the shape of a pistol under his surtout; and that on the whole he thought him as like a highwayman as any of the profession that he had seen for a long while.

To Mrs. Courtney's further and eager interrogatories, Boniface, in his prudence, declined making any very distinct answer. He did not make it his business to inquire much into the business of his guests—he liked to have as little as he could to do with the lawyers, who were always taking advantage of a man's word; and, in short, he

added, with a laugh at the point, he did not relish having much to do with any bar, but the bar of the Green Dragon.

The examination of this unwilling witness was therefore dropped; fresh horses were put to; for Boniface, tardy as he was to answer interrogatories, had already contrived to convince the postillions, by a species of argument understood up to the very foot of the throne, that fresh horses were indispensable; and the bowing landlord closed the door; assuring the travellers, that the horse-patrol had cleared the road.

The carriage began once more to dash along through wind and rain, the nucleus of a whirl of mud and water; lamps gradually thickened on the eye; the sky gradually assumed more and more the dingy red of a distant conflagration; trim houses, with twinkling tapers,

shining through the jalousies and curtains of bedchambers, gradually formed a more unbroken line along the road, till at length the pavement rattled under the wheels, and they were in London.

CHAPTER XV.

Sorrow breaks seasons and reposing hours,
Makes the night morning, and the noon-tide night.
Shakspeare.

VAUGHAN remained at home during the rest of this anxious day, engaged in the bustle of preparation for leaving town. His open defiance of the Baronet might be supposed likely to be productive of consequences; and his mind wandered among his acquaintances to find what is politely called a friend, or, in other words, a gentleman who would stand by and see him kill or be killed in the most approved manner.

The difficulty of having a friend at command is one of the old experiences

of life, and our lover and combatant examined his whole catalogue without success. Bond-street became a desert to him ; and the round world showed him no face worthy of the emergency.

Gordon would have been the man, but for the double reason, that the quarrel touched himself, and that if he had been as friendly as Pylades, he had now more interesting affairs on his hands. Courtney was out of the question, as already the champion of the enemy. Mordaunt was bold, good-natured, and willing to serve any man in any way ; but the matter, in Mordaunt's hands, would be in the hands of half the town at once ; and besides, he was gone on the wings of the wind, and would be now as difficult to catch.

In the meantime, no *cartel* had arrived from the Baronet ; and ignorant of the

circumstances which had occupied the chevalier of Mrs. Courtney, he formed his determination for the next day, and opening his desk, wrote letters to the few persons who, on the face of the earth, felt interested about him—his uncle, his mother, and his mistress.

The material of all was alike ; manly determination of vigour in his new pursuit ; natural regrets for the necessity of parting ; and prayers and hopes for the time when, difficulties overcome, and mountains and seas repelling him no more, he should return to lighten all their anxieties, and be happy without fear of change.

The letter to his mother contained his wish that she should take Miss Greville under her roof, as one who might yet be entitled to share such hospitality as he could give.

The letter to Catherine contained an intimation of this request, and a picture of the mildness, generosity, and dignity of her whom she was henceforward to look upon as a mother.

The night had now advanced ; but he felt no inclination to sleep. He walked to the window, and gazed upon the stars, which shone in their glory ; he paced the room in deep and yet wandering meditations ; he again took up his book, a popular volume ; but the vividness of knightly adventure, and the magnificence of baronial castles, had palled upon his nervous and excited spirit. He took up his pen, and his thoughts insensibly strayed into verse. Catherine's parting present lay upon his table, and was his Muse :—

THE REMEMBRANCE.

Come to my heart, thou pledge of love !
And while with life its pulses move,
In absence, peril, far or near,
Come to my heart, and rest thee there !

My days of youth are gone and past,
My manhood's hour is overcast ;
My later destiny may have
A wanderer's life, a stranger's grave ;
But whether eyes of love shall weep
Where thy pale master's relics sleep ;
Or whether on the wave or plain,
This bosom shall forget its pain ;
Yet where I rove, or where I fall,
To me thou shalt be all in all.

Come to my heart ! When thou art nigh,
The parting hour is on mine eye ;
I see the chesnut ringlets rolled
Round the bright forehead's Grecian mould ;
The ruby lip, the penciled brow,
The cheek's delicious April glow,
The smile, a sweet and sunny beam
Upon life's melancholy stream ;
The glance of soul, pure, splendid, high—
Till all the vision wanders by,
Like angels to their brighter sphere ;
And leaves me lone and darkling here !

CHAPTER XVI.

And banished I am if but from thee.
Go, speak not to me ; even now be gone.
Oh, go not yet ; even thus two friends condemned,
Embrace and kiss, and take ten thousand leaves,
Loth'er a hundred times to part than die ;
Yet now farewell, and farewell life with thee.

Shakspeare.

VAUGHAN rose from a succession of harassing dreams—he had strayed through interminable forests, and hung over precipices unfathomable ; had swept along the ocean, and had toiled over the desert ; had seen shapes of beauty that all wore the face of his fair mistress, and had seen them wafted away on sudden storms.

When he awoke, the hour was late ; and the noises of the world were thick

and busy about him. Still no intimation from the Baronet had arrived ; and the young soldier, already keen to a sense of the " world's dread laugh," found himself under the necessity of making his tardy adversary feel the hazard of provoking a quarrel. He at length recollected an acquaintance, with whom he had had to transact some business, on his first plunging into that sea of troubles and pleasures, the capital. This gentleman, a retired officer, lived in Hertfordshire ; and Vaughan set out in one of the stages to communicate his whole burning spirit to the veteran.

Major Brandreth's cottage was perfectly known to every official about the coach ; and on Vaughan's reaching the cross-road that led to it, he set forward on foot, deeply furnished with directions how to pass the by-paths and defiles of this bosky dell ; but his thoughts

were busied about other things than land-marks, and he was soon involved in remediless perplexity.

The hawthorn hedge that was to lead him along within sight of the very farm, seemed to have been erased from the fair face of nature; and the finger-posts, turnstiles, and all other customary aids of bewildered humanity, seemed to have shifted their places, or to have been whirled away by malice prepense.

He, at last, found himself at the entrance of a grove, which promised some approach to better things. He paused for a direction, with only the result of convincing himself, at once, that the evening was rapidly coming on, and that he had completely lost his way.

No cottage rose in the distance with its white-washed walls and noisy children to woo him to inquiry; no lingering haymaker, with his face doubly

flushed by the day's labour and the evening's excess, crossed his path to puzzle him with the easy joke and rich patois of the sister isle; no milkmaid, smit with sudden love for the haymaker, leaned upon gate or stile, beguiling the countless moments of his coming, by singing some rustic canzonet, or picking up poppies that vied in scarlet with her own cheeks, yet could give no "sweet oblivious antidote" to her perturbed soul; no ancient beggar sauntered along the path, counting the gains of to-day, and resting on chance and a cunning tongue for the products of to-morrow; not even a dog barked: all nature seemed to have conspired to leave him to himself; and, with a determination worthy of one whose life was to be adventure, he plunged into the little obscure and tangled path that wound away under the umbrage of oak,

pine, and elm, spreading like night above.

Twenty miles from London is not the natural location for a wilderness, nor is it likely that Vaughan would have been irrecoverably lost; yet he might have been compelled to make his choice between the shelter of a tree and the open sky for his couch, but for a sudden light that flashed from what he thought the centre of a gypsy's, bandit's, or smuggler's cave; then, the bosom of an impenetrable thicket; then, and finally, the door of a cottage.

Here was hope, but the path was still a problem; and he had scarcely solved it, and knocked at the door, when he heard a voice within ordering it to be barred; and an old domestic informed him, from a sort of loop-hole above, that there was not a living soul in the house.

This intelligence however militated so

strongly against his personal convictions, that he knocked again ; and loudly repeated his entreaty for information of the road. A consultation was evidently held within ; and he heard a voice, the tones of which struck him, desiring that “ the gentleman should be put on his way.”

The door was now about to be opened ; bar and bolt were gradually giving ground, when he felt himself suddenly seized by a man who had just sprung the hedge, and who demanded his business in a tone of high authority. Vaughan turned round, and was preparing to make fierce resistance, when a lamp just brought to the door threw its glare on both faces, and they at once pronounced, “ Vaughan ! ” “ Gordon ! ”

The story was now clear. Gordon, instead of flying with his bride to the

North, where pursuit would naturally have turned, had nestled her here in a cottage belonging to a fashionable friend. The marriage, which had been by banns, in a remote church, had been solemnized a week before; and the day of Lady Lovemore's wedding had offered the opportunity which they had sought on every day of the seven preceding. The appearance of a man summoning the house to surrender, naturally filled the mind of the young husband, who, at that moment, had rode up the path on his return from London, with fear of discovery; and Gordon would have, at that moment, defied an army.

The violence was now altogether of another character. His friend was forced into the house. Julia, blushing and beautiful, came forwards to welcome him

with mingled wonder and hospitality. Supper was ordered; a bed put in requisition for the unexpected guest; and while the master of the mansion withdrew to get rid of his boots, and the other incumbrances of travel, Vaughan and his pretty cousin, prettier than ever, were left alone to tell the history of all that had happened in the world of their relatives.

Those who take a cottage by its name would have found themselves surprised by the arrangements of the little saloon in which the conversation was pursued. The mantel-piece, of Parian marble, surmounted with the ormolu and alabaster pendule; the carpet into which the foot sank, as if into a bed of roses; the cabinet mosaiqued with marble and gems of every vein and value; the Greek sofa; the Etruscan vase; the exquisite French

bookcase, with its curtains drawn back by the hands of Muse and Grace, and filled with morocco ranges of popular Italian, French, and English poetry; the classic bust; the purple silk window draperies, all seemed to belong to some foreign *boudoir*. Still it was a cottage, and there are five hundred as rich and *recherchés* to be found in the possession of men, whose fathers were content with six days of darkness, dinginess, and suffocation in the courts and lanes of London, to be cheered for one by open sunshine, Sunday dust, and the sight of the stage-coaches.

Julia's story was simple. She had not been a favourite of her mother; with whom she had, from time to time, ventured to differ in opinion on the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious matrimony. A succession of men of

large fortune and irregular lives, equally notorious, had been speculated upon by the industrious parent, and unceremoniously discountenanced by the improvident daughter. This produced recrimination and irritability of the usual family kinds, and Julia's life grew sufficiently trying for her spirits. She rapidly faded, and a physician pronounced sentence of exile on her, to the fresh air and quiet household of an old relative at some distance from town.

There, and she told this part of her story with a bended head, and something between tenderness and jest, she had accidentally met with Gordon, who had thought proper, not having, as she said, the fear of Mrs. Courtney before his eyes, to propose that she should take the desperate chances of the world with him. Gordon was nothing, or

worse than nothing, a younger son, and a subaltern in a marching regiment.

Voilà tout.

She was reluctant, and told him that he must be undone; he was intractable, and said, that as he must in one way or another, he should prefer being undone in his own way. "In short," said Julia, laughing, "my dear cousin, it is my advice to all prudent, hawking mothers, not to send their daughters to fresh air and kind old grand-aunts. Country walks, thatched cottages, solitude, and subalterns, will be before their eyes; and after those, Baronets and Peers, in ball-rooms and *conversaziones*, will be found extremely ineffectual restoratives to common rationality.

"A few months of country discipline had returned me to Harley Street, with the look of health; and then my per-

secutions recommenced with tenfold activity. Two or three worthless old men, who, I suppose, could get nobody else to have them, honoured me with their applications, duly forwarded through the channel of matrimonial diplomacy, my mother. I had now an additional reason, and I refused with additional decisiveness. Gordon was, on the other hand, perpetually talking despair, and looking despair, till I almost began to think that the man was serious, and that his telling me I should have a life to answer for might turn out a simple truth. Marriage, which has, I suppose, put many a wise man out of the world, he was wise enough to imagine, was the only mode to keep a foolish one in it. A private marriage was his courageous proposal; for he well knew that Mrs. Courtney would have

rather, like Shylock, seen her Jessica 'hearsed at her foot,' than seen her the wife of any living personage without a title and ten thousand a-year.

"At last the crisis came. A venerable Duke, eminent for a long career of vice and vileness, had been seen exerting the last energies of his opera-glass in paying his distant devoirs to my charms. I was suddenly closeted in a high family council upon his proposals. I was there told, that nothing but madness could hesitate a moment at his Grace's most magnificent and honourable offer; that I now had in my hands the exaltation of my family, a splendid establishment for myself, place and provision for every soul that bore our name, and the most sublime opportunity of exciting the general rivalry, envy, admiration, and vexation of the whole fashionable

world. I listened, was unconvinced, and next morning walked out, met Gordon, and was married."

Vaughan's tale in return was composed of such matters as are already known to the reader; and it was soon interrupted by the return of Gordon, who announced supper, and led the way to it in another apartment decorated still more opulently than the *salon*. The little meal was served with elegance, and enlivened by the happy animation of Julia and the manly good-humour of her husband. Vaughan's sadness of spirit insensibly gave way to the simple joy of the scene; and perhaps even the thoughts of the woman he loved, and of the distant period when he might hope to realize such an hour, that now and then stole over him, gave

a deeper and more delicious colouring to his enjoyment.

On Julia's retiring, he commenced his explanation of the adventure that had brought him to disturb the lovers, and renewed his inquiries for the undiscoverable Major.

Gordon laughed. "Think no more of Majors, my dear fellow," said he; "I can tell your whole story by instinct; or, if not, by the first authority, my own, of course. I heard of your generous defence of me, and of the insolence of that coxcomb Baronet, before I was an hour here, from a friend who had remained at Mrs. Courtney's *déjeuné*, to set pursuit upon a wrong track, if pursuit should be made. He was the owner of this cottage, which he is rich and fantastic enough to have turned into a fairy palace, as you see. More know-

ing in the art and mystery of elopement than myself, I have been indebted to him, not merely for a lodging, but for the idea of leaving the Gretna road behind, and hiding in this unsuspected spot, until some newer atrocity shall occur to make ours be forgotten.

“My friend was loud in praise of your interposition, and as he seemed to think that something personal might result, you will forgive me, Vaughan, for my conceiving it essential that I should take the affair into my own hands. I left Julia on some excuse, returned to town, and sent a demand to Foxhall for an apology. I then ascertained that he had left town for the North full speed, with Mrs. Courtney for his companion; and the talkers were divided in the idea whether he was to be honoured with the hand of the detected daughter or

the loving mother. Bets to no trifling amount were soon depending, and the clubs were in high amusement upon the subject. I had taken it for granted, that the point would not be settled within a week, and was returning from town, when I saw, in a passing carriage, the Baronet and the lady returning. It was then too late to interrupt them, and I pursued my way. But this morning I was again in London, had a sulky answer from the Baronet, who was unluckily soured by the ridicule thrown upon his expedition, and was, of course, forced to go through the regular steps of the affair."

Vaughan started from his seat. "Is it possible? What will be thought of me, but that I have evaded—Gordon, I cannot forgive you!" he exclaimed. —"Yes," said his host, "you must; for

I cannot now afford to lose any of my friends. You can serve me still. As to your character, it stands clear in the opinion of every man of honour. The Baronet was unwise enough to resist all application to his sense of justice; so his less acute senses were necessarily appealed to; and, in consequence, he has carried off a bullet in his left shoulder down to Yorkshire; and will, it is to be presumed, be more cautious of his eloquence for some time to come."

The narrative, however the safety of his friend might have gratified the listener, did not satisfy his scruples. His brow darkened; and he rose to withdraw. Gordon caught his hand; and with a look suddenly changed from its light and cheerful expression, said, "You must not be offended with my anticipating you; or if you are, you

must forgive me on the ground of having troubles enough to bear without the loss of your esteem. I have a service for you." He spoke in a suppressed tone. "Julia may yet want the kindness of a man of honour, and a relative. I had heard some days ago, that my regiment was likely to be ordered to the Peninsula. This was one cause of the precipitation of my marriage. To-day, when in town, I received the order to join. It is at Portsmouth; and in a few few days I must leave this spot."

He paced the room. "How I shall break the news to Julia! under heaven I don't know. Her sensibility; her separation from her family; her unprovided, unprotected state! Madman that I was, not to have left her to the shelter even of her mother's roof, in confidence of my truth and regard!"

He clasped his hands together, and stood in a deep and bitter anxiety, which his friend felt too real and too sacred for idle consolation. Both were silent for awhile. At length Vaughan, with difficulty, turned the topic to his own destination, and demanded the young soldier's advice upon his project of volunteering into the army. Gordon's generous spirit forgot his own sorrows in the perplexities of his friend; and before they parted for the night, they had both grown calm, had discussed their mutual prospects, and had pledged themselves to manly and mutual services.

CHAPTER XVII.

Come, sit by me, Amanthis,—here are woods
Covering the forky and time-beaten hills,
Like golden canopies, beneath whose leaves
We'll lie like shepherds. Hard by is a fount
That runs with living crystal, at whose brim
We'll cool our lips i' the summer-noon, or sleep
To its sweet murmuring music, or at eve
Reckon the living diamonds that the stars
Wake on its liquid purple.

Phineas Webb.

THE morn was fresh and fair; and the breeze, scented with the breath of a thousand buds and blooms, came wooingly through the open casement of Vaughan's chamber. He rose, and saw before him all the loveliness of the true English landscape: the rich valley beneath, with a stream that flowed like silver in the morning light; the hill, one bright sheet of verdure, studded with

noble trees, and crowned with a forest ; and over all, the first rich rose-colour of a summer sun-rise.

He wandered into the garden, which the taste and luxury of its master had filled with a profusion of the rarest flowers : it was extensive, and a multitude of paths covered with velvet turf, led each to some point of landscape beauty, or some object of graceful art, statue, or vase, or fountain, almost hidden in their festoons of vine and rose.

One of those paths, the most devious and the darkest, guided him under a perpetual canopy of fragrant and weeping blossoms to what seemed an ancient shrine, of the whitest marble. Under its roof, wrought with the whole rich and delicate tracery of Gothic sculpture, stood upon a low tomb a bust, that struck Vaughan as of exquisite beauty. It was of a female ; and from the oval counte-

nance, the long and veiling eyelash, and the mingled expression of noble thought and deep sensibility, appeared Spanish or Italian. The inscription was from a love poem of Moratin.

Nunca de ti me acuerdo.

Duena querida!

Porque aquel que se acuerda,

Supone olvido.

Y yo en mi mente

Tengo la imagen tuya

Siempre presente!

Gordon found him still absorbed in the contemplation of this fine memorial, and trying to catch its beauty with his pencil. But to his inquiries into its history, he could obtain no other answer, than that the owner of the cottage had lived long abroad, and had been engaged in some unhappy affairs, which drove him first from the Continent, and then almost from any willing intercourse with society even at home. That he

was generous, noble-minded, and sensitive in his early years ; but had from disappointment grown fantastic, capricious, and contemptuous of mankind. " To me," said Gordon, " he has been unremittingly friendly ; and I believe I am now almost the only one of his earlier host of friends whom he does not shun and scorn. But he preserves his secrets with the strange and rigid delight of one fond of suffering ; and nothing but the necessity of the moment could, I am persuaded, have induced him to allow of an intrusion within his walls. But come, Julia waits for our return, and pines to shew her dexterity in presiding at a country breakfast-table."

They returned ; and the hours flew rapidly on, till Vaughan rose to take his leave. Julia, softened by recollection, shed many a gentle tear while she

charged him with messages to her sisters, and a long and supplicating letter to her mother. Gordon accompanied his friend through the bushy and blossomed lanes which had bewildered him in the twilight of the evening before, but which in the brighter day looked all picturesque and florid beauty. They reached the high road, the horn of the stage echoed at a distance, the stage itself at length appeared, tottering on the ridge of the hill that seemed to shut out this pastoral valley from the world: it came on, sliding down the narrow descent, sometimes lost among the bordering elms, sometimes starting up from the hollow of the declivity, till it reached the foot of the rising ground on which they stood, and began slowly toiling upwards with its huge and wavering pile of passengers and baggage.

There was now no time for converse.

Gordon had already explained his views for Julia in his absence from England; and Vaughan had fervently pledged himself to esteem and serve her as his sister. Their parting words were dictated by the same strong impulse, and were alike: "If I fall, remember Julia."—"If I fall, remember Catherine." They pressed each other's hands, and parted.

Next morning, Vaughan was on his way to Portsmouth. He left London without regret, or with but one regret; and prepared for the new life that lay before him with the vividness and vigour of his nature. The humble rank in which he was about to enter on his profession almost operated as a stimulant to his spirit, and he made many secret determinations that, let his rank be what it might, he would make it entitled to honour.

Yet he was ill at ease, and the slight and wandering conversation of a stage-coach was not attractive enough to induce him to forego the pictures, "pleasant yet mournful," that his fancy was drawing of the past and the future. With something of the vagueness yet the lingering delight of a dream, he called up in succession the scenes and persons that he loved. He saw Catherine, sheltered in his mother's cottage, exempt from persecution, and with that countenance of fond yet lofty beauty that he thought the world could not match, gazing on his picture, or sending her soul after him in the thoughts of all but wedded love. He saw his gentle and admirable parent soothing her as a daughter, and living on the hope of his return.

Then the image of Julia, the pretty, the animated Julia, looking like another

Euphrosyne, rose before him; he saw her wandering through her romantic shades, hanging on her husband's arm, fixing her brilliant eyes on his, and listening with sportive delight to his language of love. He saw Gordon's brow grow grave, and heard his tongue falter as he attempted to tell Julia the tidings of his destination. The picture was painful, but he went on drawing it with a strange interest; he saw Julia's quick eye caught by the change, he saw her very lip turn white, and a tear ready to fall—when he was relieved, and the whole vision broken up by the stoppage of the coach, for dinner.

Here two of the passengers took their departure, and Vaughan was left to pursue his journey with a pale and intelligent-looking man of middle age, who like himself had not uttered a syllable since his entering the coach. They now mu-

tually felt the awkwardness of silence, and commenced a conversation.

The stranger soon gratified his companion in a high degree. He was familiar with a large extent of general literature, and had added to his knowledge the grace of travel. He had been from his youth a wanderer in pursuit of all that was curious or characteristic in every region of the earth. Pyramids and pagodas, the Mandarin, and the priest of Tibet, the Mussulman on the banks of the Indus, of the Nile, or of the Bosphorus, were familiar with him "as household names;" he had slept on snow at the summit of the Himmaleh, and had luxuriated under the grape clusters and orange blooms of a Greek Isle.

But his last traverse had been through the Peninsula. On this part of his narrative Vaughan hung with an anxious ear. The stranger described it with the

detail of exact knowledge, and with the spirit of natural feeling; the people, as brave, yet capricious in their courage; as high-minded in their opposition to the French, yet as prejudiced in their connexion with heretical England; but the country, a perpetual succession of all that was noble, rich, and picturesque in landscape. Vaughan began to chide the slow hours and the leagues of rolling billow, that lay between him and this land of beauty and fame.

The coach had now tardily made its way up Portsdown hill, and the whole shore burst on his eye. The evening was fine, and the sun lay "pillowing his chin upon a western wave." The batteries, the sea, the fleet of transports with their convoy, the Isle of Wight, lying green as an emerald beyond—all filled the young adventurer with a sensation of high and almost oppressive delight.

The stranger took his hand, and looking on his enthusiastic countenance with a smile, said, "My dear young soldier, cherish those feelings ; keep them pure, strong, and natural, as they are at this moment." Vaughan checked himself, as if he had been detected. "No, Sir, there is no shame in those things," added the stranger ; "and Heaven grant that neither man nor—" he paused—"nor woman may chill them." The coach had had now arrived at the hotel ; and the stranger, promising him letters for his regiment, gave him his card, and bade him good-bye. Vaughan looked on the card, and saw the name of Colonel Windham ! the abjured lover of his cousin Clementina.

END OF VOL. I.

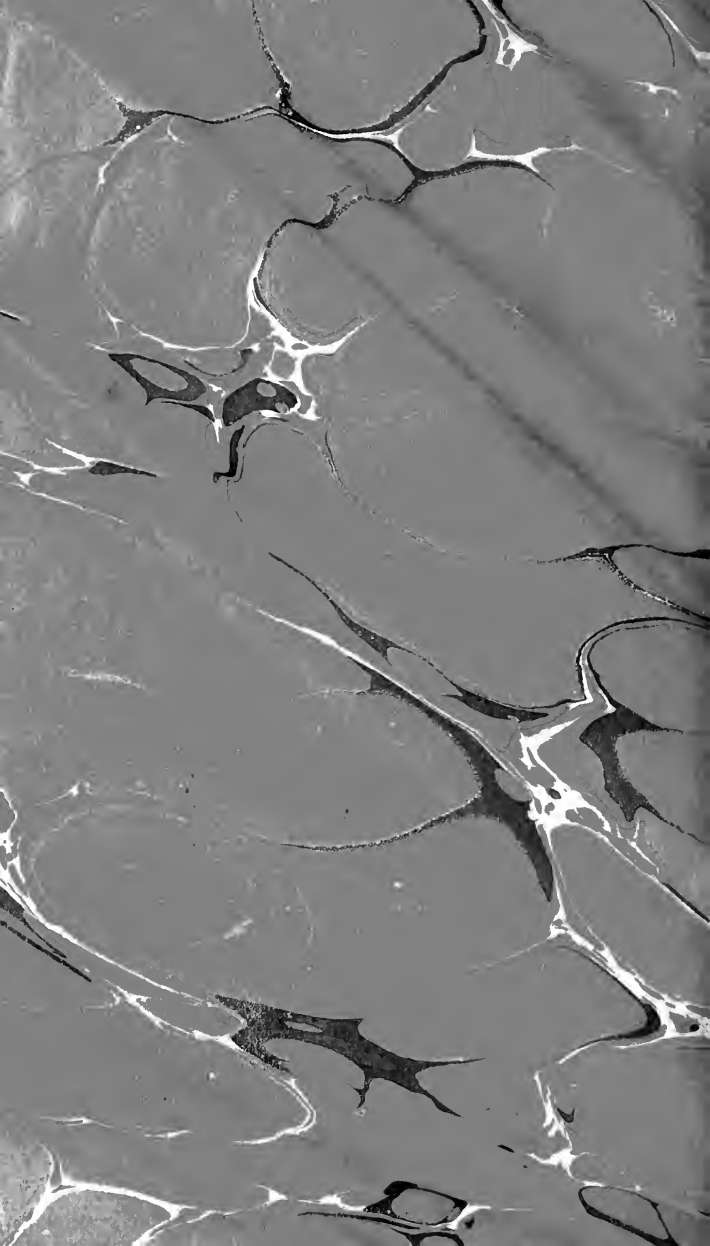


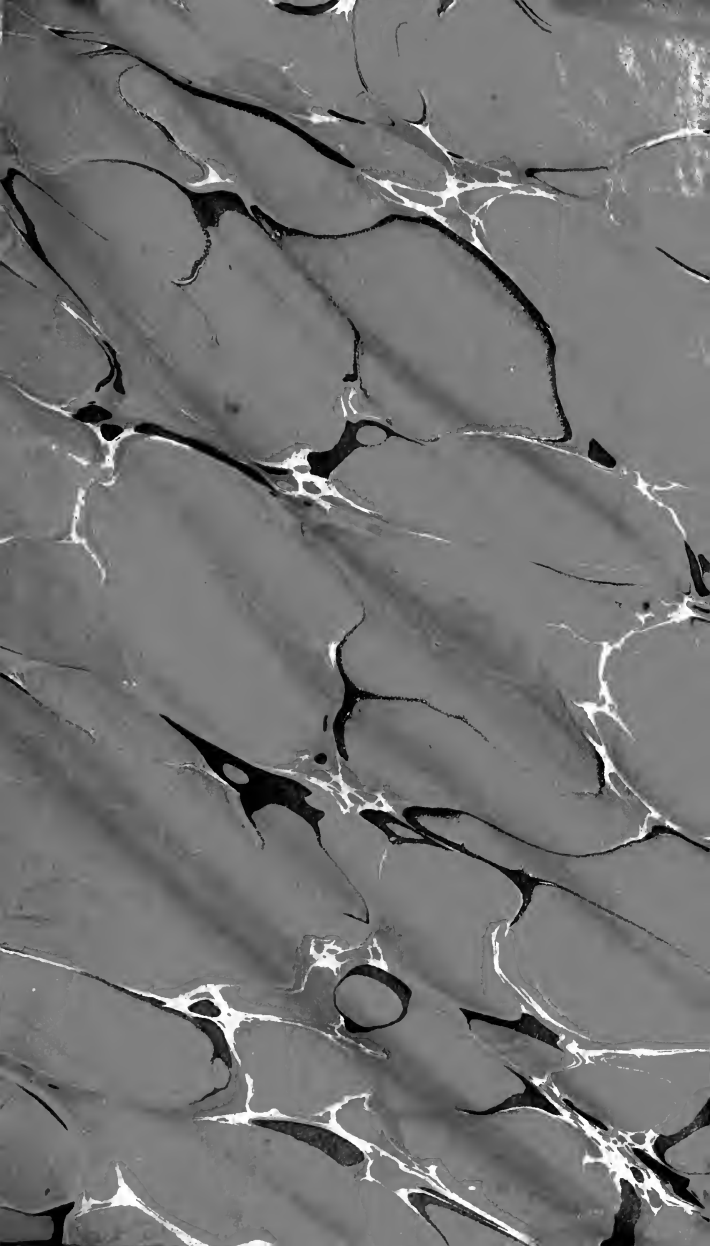












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